THE

RIGHT HON. BENJAMIN DISRAELI,

EARL OF BEACONSFIELD, K.G.,

AND HIS TIMES.

BY

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Engraved by W. Holl from an original Cabinet Picture by Sir Thos. Lawrence in the Possession of F. J. Hamel Esq.

SIR ROBERT PEEL BART.

WILLIAM MACKENZIE, LONDON, EDINBURGH & GLASGOW.

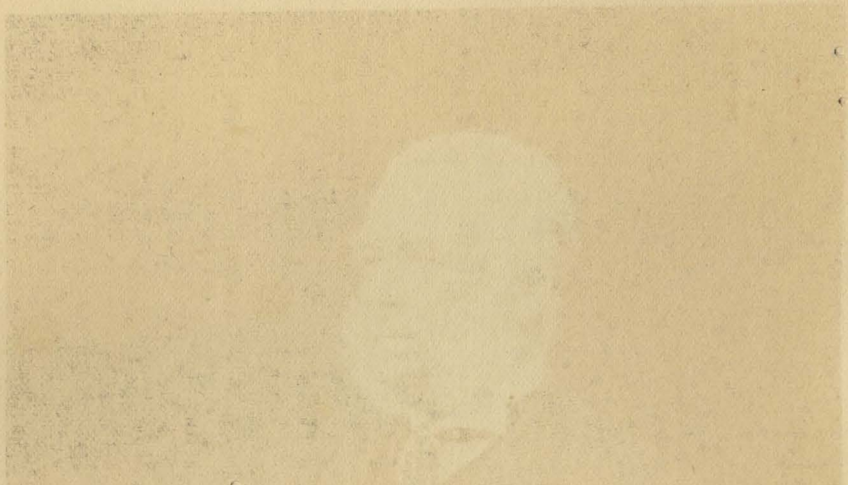


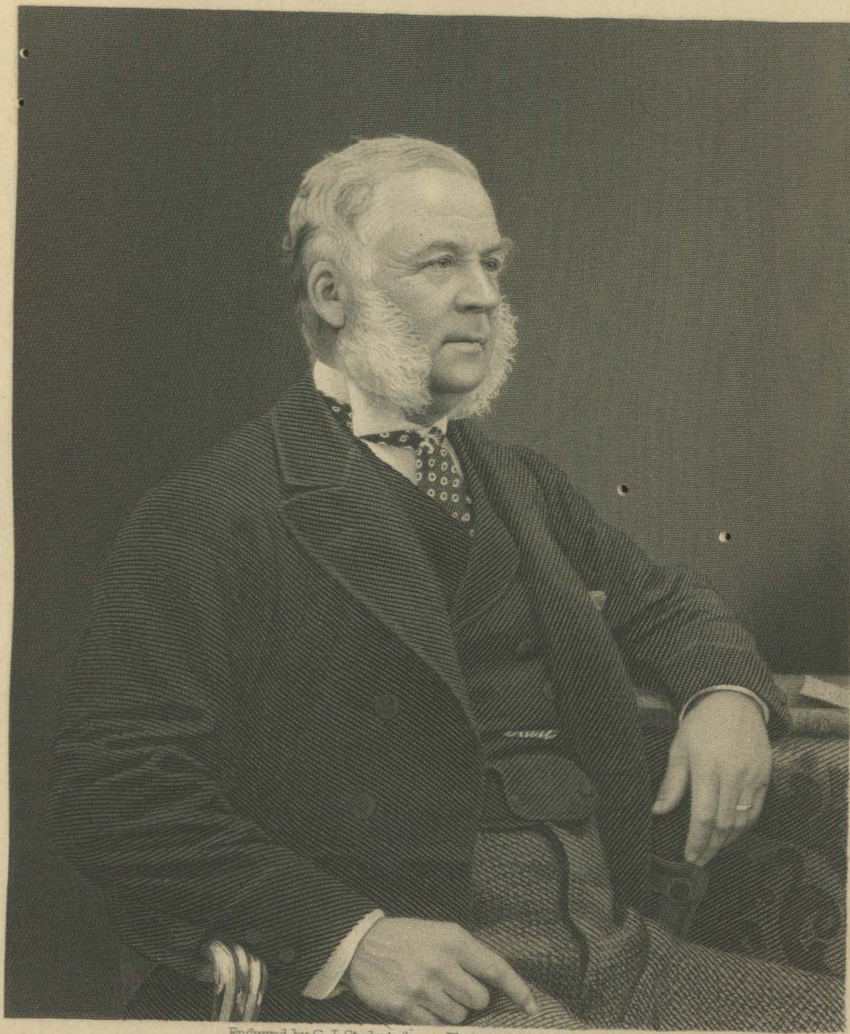
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RIGHT HON. RICHARD SOUTHWELL BOURKE,

EARL OF MAYO.

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DUKE OF RICHMOND & GORDON, K.G.

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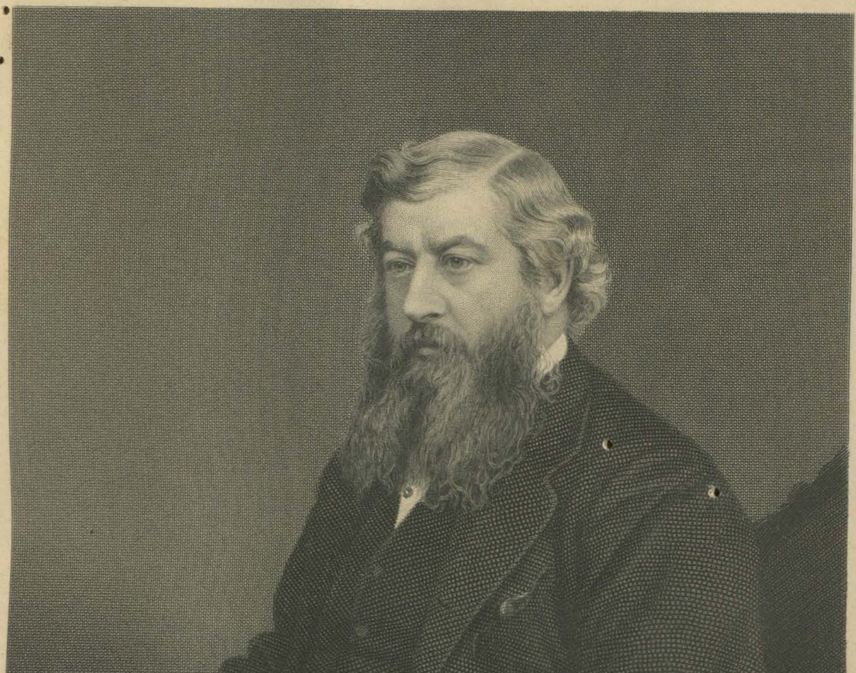


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THE RIGHT HONOURABLE EDWARD HENRY STANLEY,

EARL OF DERBY.

WILLIAM MACKENZIE, LONDON, EDINBURGH & GLASGOW.



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RIGHT HON. GEORGE WARD HUNT, M.P.

WILLIAM MACKENZIE, LONDON, EDINBURGH & GLASGOW.

few days; and although I deem that the merits of the question cannot in the smallest degree depend upon the truth or untruth of any such allegation, I think it my duty to state, so far as I am myself concerned, that neither this nor any other suggestion was mentioned by me to Her Majesty during the time when I had the honour to be in her service." Where, then, and how did Mr. Lowe obtain the information necessary to substantiate this charge of servility against Mr. Disraeli? Or had he stooped so low as to gratify the spontaneous aversion with which he had been so richly endowed, by uttering a foul and malevolent lie in order to do hurt to a hated political opponent?

The accusation was not permitted to "die away." On the reassembling of parliament, Mr. Charles Lewis drew attention to the subject in the House of Commons, and moved for returns of the form of oath taken by privy councillors. He desired to know the dates when the Earl of Derby, Lord Palmerston, Earl Russell, and Messrs. Disraeli, Gladstone, and Lowe were sworn of the council, in order to ascertain, should the statement by Mr. Lowe be true, whether the oath had not been broken by at least two of the above-mentioned ministers. The accusation by Mr. Lowe had not been thoughtlessly made. "It was," said Mr. Lewis, "a deliberate political attack by an ex-minister on his opponents; and they were entitled to ask him, as an ex-minister of state and as an ex-privy councillor, on what authority he had made the statement."

Mr. Lowe, charmingly unconscious that he was delivering himself absolutely into the hands of his enemy, was inclined to be flippant. He congratulated Mr. Lewis upon having found "a vocation in life," which was that of interrogation. Still, like Rob Roy, Mr. Lewis might be said to live too late. "He ought to have lived," said this playful calumniator of his sovereign and her advisers, "in the glorious times when interrogation was seconded by certain physical appliances which made it very difficult to refuse to answer anything that might be asked. [It was certainly very fortunate for Mr. Lowe's head that its owner had not lived in 'those glorious times.'] There is a mixture of questioning, and threatening, and preaching in the hon. and learned member's speech, which irresistibly takes my mind back to the glorious days of the Inquisition, and makes me feel how dreadful it would be if I had the hon. and learned member to cross-examine me with a lever in hand ready to crush my bones if I did not answer his questions." And these questions Mr. Lowe refused to answer. He was not to be called to account in the House of Commons for what he had said out of doors "simply as a spouter." Was the House of Commons, he asked, going to undertake a kind of general censorship, and punish freedom of speech exercised by orators in the country? Every member attended political and other meetings where the language used was not always conventional, and was he, therefore, to be liable to be judged by the House of Commons for words that had been said on those occasions? He refused to be bound by such a ruling. He would not answer Mr. Lewis' interrogatories; he would leave him to the fate of the mother of Sisera, who put questions to herself and answered them. Mr. Lowe then concluded by haughtily denying the right of the House of Commons to criticise the remarks he had made at East Retford.

Mr. Disraeli rose to address the House. He had not commissioned Mr. Lewis to introduce the subject, but since the motion had been brought forward it was impossible for him not to take part in the discussion. Besides he had a little communication to make, which would somewhat astonish his loose and reckless detractor.

"I regret," he said (May 2, 1876), "that this motion has been brought before the House; but I regret still more the speech by which it has been met by the right hon. gentleman. He has given us a picture of what occurs at our usual provincial

political meetings; and he has very truly said—what every one must feel—that nothing would be more unwise, and nothing could be more unnecessary, than that expressions used on these political occasions, which may offend a party, which may be deficient in taste and even in truth, should be called in question and subject to the criticism of the House of Commons. The dinner which the right hon. gentleman attended, and which has given rise to this motion, was however, in my opinion, one to be rather distinguished from the common order of these provincial and political gatherings. However we may indulge in what is styled the rough and ready expression of our political opinions, whatever they may be, and whether Conservative or Liberal—however we may sometimes exceed the limits of propriety, of gentleman-like feeling or taste, it is not, I believe, the practice in this country to seize that occasion to make comments on the conduct of the sovereign. And the right hon. gentleman must have felt, during the whole time while he was attempting to vindicate that freedom of speech necessary at the meetings of Englishmen, that it was not the boisterous festivity of the East Retford assembly that led to these painful inquiries, but that it was the circumstance that a politician—and a politician of a distinguished character who had held high and responsible office—while the country was interested in the discussion of a great public question, should have taken the opportunity of making statements which were *monstrous if they were true, but which, if they were not true, must be described by an epithet I cannot find in my vocabulary.* Sir, did the right hon. gentleman or did he not—not merely intimate, not insinuate, but I say broadly state to the people of this country, that the royal titles measure was introduced to the notice of parliament by the unconstitutional and personal influence of the sovereign? Did he or did he not take that occasion to hold up to public prejudice, and I will say, public infamy, the chief minister, asserting, under circumstances detailed by the right hon. gentleman with minuteness, that after that gracious sovereign had been balked and baffled in her appeals to previous ministers, she had found a pliant and a servile instrument who was now ready to do her will? [*Opposition cheers.*] I believe I have stated the case fairly, as hon. gentlemen opposite acknowledge by their cheers; and having done so, let us calmly examine the facts.

"There were two chief ministers to whom the sovereign of this country had appealed to carry a measure similar to the royal titles bill, a measure with that object at least; and who had refused to undertake an office which they believed was dangerous to the state and to the honour of the crown. That statement, made by a privy councillor and by one who had been a cabinet minister, naturally affected, and does affect to this moment, the opinion and feeling of the country. *Was it true? If the statement were true, it ought not to have been made.* That, however, is a part of the case on which I shall not pause to dwell. That must be obvious to every hon. gentleman, and it has been touched upon sufficiently. I confine myself on the present occasion to asking is it true? Who were these two preceding ministers? The right hon. gentleman the member for Greenwich [Mr. Gladstone], was naturally one who was immediately in the public mind; and all of us admiring, and a large portion of the country justly placing their trust and confidence in him, must have been immensely influenced by the conviction that he had given such advice to Her Majesty, and had refused his sanction to the introduction of such a measure. The member for the University of London [Mr. Lowe] served in office under the right hon. gentleman, the member for Greenwich, in more than one post, and posts ultimately of extreme importance, and such as would naturally entitle him to the confidence of the right hon. gentleman the member for Greenwich, and therefore giving an additional plausi-

bility to any statement he made which might depend upon the degree of confidence subsisting between him and the member for Greenwich. The member for Greenwich took occasion in a most precise and, I will say, almost solemn letter, at once to meet that statement. Observe, in comparison with the conduct of the member for Greenwich, the view of the position just taken by the member for the University of London. This is, it seems, according to him, a rude boisterous meeting, according to the custom of rough and ready Englishmen in an obscure corner—he hardly remembers the name of the place, and really forgets the name of the society which assembled. It was nothing more than what happens every day in England. We are pursuing the most insignificant of objects, and it is absurd that the House of Commons should condescend to be aware of their existence. But that was not the feeling of the right hon. gentleman the member for Greenwich, one of the leading members of this House, and one exercising a just and great influence on the opinions of his countrymen. The right hon. gentleman felt it to be an occasion on which his duty required that he should at once meet it in a manner the most precise and the most solemn, and he told the country that it was false.

"How about the other ministers?" continued Mr. Disraeli; "there is another minister to whom this might apply. I am myself not in the category, because I do not suppose, being so servile at the present moment, that I was much bolder on a former occasion. But we come now to the position of the late Earl of Derby, unfortunately no longer among us. I lived with him, so far as political circumstances are concerned, in as much intimacy as probably ever existed between two public men. I believe I shared his confidence entirely, and it so happens that at the period to which the right hon. gentleman refers, when at least the circumstances to which he refers would naturally have occurred—the change of the government in India and the transference of India from the Company to the Crown—I was in hourly communication with Lord Derby, because at that time the new India bill was preparing by Lord Ellenborough. . . . I frequently discussed with him and Lord Ellenborough the subject whether the crown should, under these circumstances, take a new title in India, and there were reasons of state which rendered it most expedient on the whole that this question should be postponed. Indeed, I was so acquainted with these affairs that I was—which is the fact—myself personally responsible for the royal proclamation issued at that time, and for that particular description of the queen's titles which has been quoted more than once in our debates. I think, therefore, I am justified in saying that I express a most profound conviction—judging from my intimacy with Lord Derby, and my recollection of all the circumstances of the time—in stating that no proposition of the kind was ever made to Lord Derby.

"Well, there remain two other ministers whose confidence I did not share, and respecting whom personally I cannot speak. There is the venerable Lord Russell, and there is Lord Palmerston, whom we all recollect with regard and honour. Now, this matter having agitated the country, and having been brought before the attention of parliament, it is most unwise that it should be left in doubt, or that there should be any hesitation in the public mind, because otherwise *these calumnies crop up again, and these reckless speeches are again in time a source of authenticity for statements which have not been authoritatively denied and destroyed.* Sir, I speak with the greatest difficulty at this moment, and I can only speak with the indulgence of the House. I have the authority of Her Majesty to make a statement on her part; but at the same time, as I have felt it my duty to place before Her Majesty the fact that it is not according to the rules of the House that the name of the sovereign can be introduced into

debate without the permission of the House—it therefore rests with the House whether I shall go on. If the House desires it I shall do so."

Mr. Disraeli here resumed his seat. The House was hushed and expectant; Mr. Lowe was uncomfortable; all his levity had gone, and he seemed painfully conscious that the debate had taken a turn for which he had been totally unprepared. He had been so accustomed all his life, ever since he had studied men and manners at a colonial bar, to vent his malice when the mood so prompted him, and to hurl his reckless assertions with an indiscriminate hand at all who barred his path or excited his easily aroused dislike, without ever being called to account for his statements, that he could not believe that the moment had at last arrived when he was to be made seriously answerable for a venomous and groundless accusation. He was, however, to find, in spite of the leniency that Mr. Disraeli suggested should be extended to him on account of his long residence at the Antipodes, that to insult the crown and to charge the premier with a pliant toadyism were not matters of the trifling importance he considered them. Amid dead silence the speaker granted Mr. Disraeli permission to introduce the name of Her Majesty into his statement.

"It is merely this statement on the part of Her Majesty," quietly continued Mr. Disraeli, "*that there is not the slightest foundation for the statement that was made, that proposals, such as were described in the Retford speech, were ever made to any minister at any time.* Sir, the whole thing is utterly unfounded—merely that sort of calumnious gossip which unfortunately, I suppose, must always prevail, but which one certainly did not suppose would come from the mouth of a privy councillor, and one of Her Majesty's late cabinet ministers."

Then Mr. Disraeli sat down. Never had refutation been more crushing and complete; never had the biter been more severely bitten; never had the arts of an unscrupulous malice been more made to recoil upon the assailant. Mr. Lowe stood convicted in the face of evidence that could not be gainsaid, of having gratuitously invented a calumnious piece of gossip in order to hold up Mr. Disraeli to public infamy. Such an act received the full punishment it deserved. It was stigmatized as a base and craven proceeding, and from both sides of the House expressions scarcely parliamentary were freely indulged in, denouncing both the author and the deed. So direct and thorough had been the contradiction of the prime minister to this malevolent calumny, that Mr. Lowe had no alternative but to make a full and contrite apology. He acknowledged, he said, that he ought not to have made the statement; he had no doubt that he was entirely mistaken, and he retracted all that he said. So far so good. The character of Mr. Disraeli was vindicated, and his denouncer had donned the white sheet of the public and abject penitent. But we think there are certain offences which cannot be covered and wiped out by an apology, however handsome; and the offence committed by Mr. Lowe was one of those unpardonable political sins. We must also remember that when arraigned by Mr. Lewis, the offender declined to be called to account, or to express any regret for the atrocious slander he had circulated. He was jaunty, amusing, triumphant. The apology had only been wrung from him by the convincing refutation advanced by Mr. Disraeli. When a man has been found out, and has not a loop-hole for escape, or a single fact to suggest in extenuation of his guilt, he is generally abject and sweeping in his contrition. But had Mr. Lowe not been found out, had Mr. Disraeli's refutation been less satisfactory, had Her Majesty not authorized her prime minister to make that statement, or had the House of Commons not permitted such statement to be brought forward, what would have been the nature of Mr. Lowe's apology? Would he have apologized at

all? Is it ungenerous to suppose, that the man who was capable for his own spiteful ends of inventing so malicious a tale, would not have been capable of brazening it out to the last? An apology which has been simply wrung from an offender, and which has become absolutely necessary to proffer, loses all its value; such was the case with the apology made by Mr. Lowe. It cannot be considered to have condoned so unpardonable an offence; and though both sides of the House cheered the apparently penitent politician, it was felt that Mr. Lowe had given a blow to his reputation from which it would never recover. It has never recovered. From the day of the East Retford speech we may date the gradual alienation of his party from Mr. Lowe, and discover one of the reasons of his present exclusion from office. To invent a calumny in order to provide a text for the indictment of a minister is, even in these days of parliamentary degeneracy, scarcely regarded as a mode of legitimate warfare.

Meanwhile the development of the Eastern question gave rise to much anxiety. Nothing came of the Andrassy Note; the rebels refused to put faith in the promises of the Porte, and continued fighting. The rebellion spread; and with the progress of the revolt the demands of the insurgents became more sweeping and exacting. Turkey, pressed by the schemes and demands of her creditors, hampered by ministerial feuds which led to the resignation and subsequent death of the Sultan Abdul Aziz, and crippled by the action of the powers, had to exert all her energies and resources to thwart the opposition she had encountered. Then the Christians, stimulated by Russian intrigue, rose in a mass against their oppressors in Bulgaria and Roumelia, and essayed to gain their freedom. We have no intention of discussing a thrice-told tale as to the nature and extent of the "atrocities" that were committed on that occasion by the "unspeakable Turk." Undoubtedly terrible deeds were perpetrated, both by the so-called Christian against the Turk, and by the Turk against the so-called Christian. Without pinning our faith upon the reports of newspaper correspondents who, grafting Hibernian mendacity upon Yankee exaggeration, drew the most terrible pictures of Turkish lust and cruelty, there can be little doubt but that awful enormities were committed in the endeavour to suppress the rebellion. And, with no wish to defend the Turk, we would ask, has any insurrection, whether in ancient or modern history, ever yet been put down without "atrocities" having been the result of the revolt?

If the conduct of the Turk on that occasion had been the one crying exception to the general rule, then the agitation and indignation that were excited against the Porte would be easily accounted for. But the opportunity was not to be lost by the Liberals of turning the "Bulgarian atrocities" to good account, and using them as weapons against the government. The Turk was vehemently denounced, Russia was lauded to the skies as the protector of the Christians, and the country was flooded with pamphlets narrating with sickly minutiæ the deeds of terrible barbarity that had been, and had not been, enacted in Bulgarian villages. The agitation was, however, simply a party move and nothing more. It was based neither on humanity nor philanthropy. Mr. Gladstone saw that the occasion was favourable, by disparaging the Turk, to decry the Eastern policy of the Conservative government. He penned tracts full of violent verbosity, he made speeches by the furlong, he vowed that the hated Ottoman should be expelled from Europe "bag and baggage." The whole thing, however, was, as we have said, simply a party move, and inspired neither by a love of mercy, toleration, nor Christianity. The Liberals wanted a good "cry" to work upon the feelings of the country, and the "Bulgarian atrocities" gave it them. As for the pure love of humanity, on which it was asserted that the agitation was based, the less said the better. Recent events have

proved that when Russia is the aggressor and not Turkey, and when the victims are only Poles and Jews instead of disaffected Bulgarians, Mr. Gladstone and his followers can be as supremely indifferent to "atrocities" as if they themselves had warred in Central Asia or had suppressed a revolt in Warsaw.

Mr. Disraeli was not to be deceived by the agitation set on foot, or turned from his purpose. He did not consider himself bound to believe every bit of chatter circulated by newspaper correspondents, or every story told by travelling clergy, who had mistaken wisps of straw on hop poles, to frighten away crows, as unhappy Bulgarians impaled by the "unspeakable Turk." He knew that deeds of cruelty had been committed in Bulgaria by the Porte, from the despatches he received from the English ambassador at Constantinople. He was not surprised at the facts recorded, for he knew how Eastern powers, and also for the matter of that how Western powers, suppress a dangerous insurrection; yet, he deeply regretted the enormities that had been perpetrated, and had sternly counselled the Porte to resort to more moderate measures. From time to time he was called upon, as the insurrection proceeded, to state what he knew of the alleged crimes committed in Bulgaria. Deriving his information from official sources instead of from daily journals; and being a responsible minister of the crown, and not an imaginative correspondent, Mr. Disraeli was naturally guarded in his answers. Shortly after the revolt had broken out, and when the columns of the newspapers were full of the cruelties perpetrated by the Turkish troops in the suppression of the insurrection, he had been asked by Mr. W. E. Forster whether such distressing statements were true? The prime minister replied (June 26, 1876) that he had no information which justified such statements.

"Some time ago," he said, "when troubles first commenced in Bulgaria, they appear to have begun by strangers entering the country and burning the villages without reference to religion or race. The Turkish government at that time had no regular troops in Bulgaria, and the inhabitants of course were obliged to defend themselves. The persons who are called Bashi-bazouks and Circassians are persons who had settled in the country, and had a stake in it. I have not the slightest doubt myself that the war, if you can call it a war, between the invaders and the Bashi-bazouks and the Circassians, was carried on with great ferocity.* One can easily understand, under the circumstances under which these outrages occurred, and with such populations, that that might happen. I am told that no quarter was given; and no doubt scenes took place which we must all entirely deplore. But in the month of May the attention of Sir Henry Elliot (the English ambassador at Constantinople) was called to this state of things from some information which reached him, and he immediately communicated with the Porte, who at once ordered some regular troops to repair to Bulgaria, and steps to be taken by which the action of the Bashi-bazouks and Circassians might be arrested. Very shortly after the disturbances in Bulgaria seem to

* "The Turkish government has been unjustly denounced for having placed Circassian colonies in Bulgaria, purposely to oppress and keep down the Christians. This is one of those reckless accusations that have been made by the advocates of Russia in England, and by no one else. The facts were these. A large Mohammedan population were driven by the Russians from the Caucasus. The Turkish government received these people hospitably and placed them in different parts of the empire. Some had lands and villages assigned to them in Bulgaria proper, others to the south of the Balkan; some in Asia Minor, others in Mesopotamia. Whether placed near Mussulmans or Christians, they unfortunately showed the same propensities; the same complaints are made against them in Mesopotamia as in Bulgaria. But it must be remembered that they came infuriated and smarting from Russian tyranny, and they were at one time the favourite heroes of the same persons in England who are now making similar heroes of the Montenegrins, and who would have been the first to denounce the Turks, had they not hospitably received and treated the Circassians. Montenegrins are not less cruel in their treatment of Mussulmans, than Circassians are of Christians; witness the noses of mutilated Turks which they treasured up in the late war, as an American Indian his trophies of scalps. All such barbarians should and must be kept down with a strong hand; and the Turkish government could have little difficulty in disarming the Circassians, and compelling them to abstain from molesting their neighbours."—*Quarterly Review The Eastern Question, January* 1877.

have ceased. That is all the information I have to give the right hon. gentleman on the subject; and I will merely repeat that *the information which we have at various times received does not justify the statements made in the newspapers he has named.*"

Still, the history of the Bulgarian insurrection continued to be written, not from official state papers, but from the gossip and chatter of "our own correspondent." Every morning the newspapers served up new horrors, and satisfied to the full the craving for the morbid their sickly romancing had excited. The reports of the English consuls in Turkey, and the despatches from Constantinople commenting upon the cruelties that had been practised in the suppression of the insurrection, were anything but pleasant reading; yet, compared with the narratives of the professional horror-monger, they faded away into insignificance. Men were imprisoned and tortured, women were grossly outraged, children were tossed about on bayonets, girls were sold as slaves, whole villages were depopulated; houses, farms, and monasteries were burnt to the ground, and their inmates forced back in the flames—in short, the fiends of hell had been let loose, and were confining their labours to Bulgaria. Again Mr. Disraeli was asked, by Mr. W. E. Forster, had these atrocities really occurred?

"With respect to the reports of the terrible atrocities," said the prime minister (July 10, 1876), "to which the right hon. gentleman has referred, I would still express a hope that when we become better informed — I would express this hope for the sake of human nature itself—when we are thoroughly informed of what has occurred, it will be found that the statements are scarcely warranted. The House must recollect that we are in constant communication with our ambassador at Constantinople. Every day we hear from him. Sir Henry Elliot is not a man to be insensible to such terrible proceedings. On the contrary, he is a stern assertor of humanity; and I know no man who would more firmly and energetically interfere, if he were aware of events such as those to which the right hon. gentleman has referred. We are also represented in the seats of disturbance by gentlemen, as Her Majesty's consuls, eminent for their abilities and high character—at Belgrade, at Ragusa, at Cettinje, and at other places; we are in constant communication with those gentlemen, and *certainly no information of the kind* has as yet reached Her Majesty's government. *That there have been proceedings of an atrocious character in Bulgaria I never for a moment doubted. Wars of insurrection are always atrocious.* These are not wars carried on by regular troops—in this case not even by irregular troops—but by a sort of *posse comitatus* of an armed population. We know in our own experience that one of our colonies, an ancient colony of England—Jamaica—was the scene of transactions, and of a panic which always accompanies insurrection, which no one can look back upon without horror. I cannot doubt that atrocities have been committed in Bulgaria; but that girls were sold into slavery, or that more than 10,000 persons have been imprisoned, I doubt. In fact I doubt whether there is prison accommodation for so many, or that torture has been practised on a great scale among an oriental people who seldom, I believe, resort to torture, but generally terminate their connection with culprits in a more expeditious manner. I can only repeat that every effort will be made by Her Majesty's government, and—as hon. gentlemen will see when the papers are before them—has already been made to impress on the government of Constantinople that the utmost efforts should be made to mitigate as much as possible the terrible scenes that are now inevitably occurring."

Undoubtedly at this time deeds of cruelty had been committed in Bulgaria by the Turks, which had not yet reached the ears

of the government. It was not the business of Mr. Disraeli to peruse the newspapers, and to listen to every piece of "coffee-house babble" that was brought to him, and shape his policy accordingly. He was a minister, and not a mere politician; and he could only speak upon what he knew from official despatches. His information could only be derived from state papers, and not from newspapers. The newspaper correspondent might write a true account, or he might write an imaginative account; but the ambassador, at the risk of his diplomatic reputation, had to furnish particulars drawn from authentic sources, which were to serve as a brief to the minister. Until those particulars reached him, Mr. Disraeli was justified in limiting his statements strictly to the official information he possessed. What the despatches revealed he disclosed, but he declined to consult any other source for his knowledge. A few days after his last statement, the necessary documents arrived from Constantinople, and he proceeded (July 17, 1876) to lay their contents before the House. The case appeared very different from the one-sided sensational accounts in the daily journals. Atrocities had been perpetrated by both parties. The Bulgarians, encouraged by revolutionary agents, inspired by Russia and the "secret societies," had risen in revolt, and Turkish troops had endeavoured to crush out the disaffection. Villages had been burnt, and farms ravaged by the Bulgarians and the Circassians — "a courageous and armed population" had taken matters into their own hands and avenged themselves. "There is no doubt," said Mr. Disraeli, "from the evidence before the House, that acts on both sides, as necessarily would be the case under such circumstances, were equally terrible and atrocious." Then he came to the horrors which had been recorded with such sickly details—how villages had been pillaged and burnt, how Bulgarian girls and children had been sold publicly as slaves, how women had been violated, how cart-loads of the heads of murdered women and children had been boastfully paraded in the streets by the Bashi-bazouks after each defeat, and the rest. The government had at once written to the ambassador at Constantinople as to the truth of these infernal deeds. The replies from Sir Henry Elliot had been received, and Mr. Disraeli proceeded to read extracts to the House. Let us listen to some of them:—

"The excesses committed in the suppression of the insurrection have been very great, as was inevitable from the nature of the force which the Porte was in the first emergency obliged to employ; but it is equally certain that the details which have been given, *coming almost exclusively from Russian and Bulgarian sources, are so monstrously exaggerated as to deprive them of much claim to attention.* Cases of revolting cruelty have been mentioned to me in such a circumstantial manner as to make it almost impossible to doubt the truth, but which proved on investigation to be entirely fictitious; and without impartial agents on the spot I am unable to say more than that I am satisfied that while great atrocities have been committed both by Turks upon Christians and Christians upon Turks, the former have been by far the greatest, although the Christians were undoubtedly the first to commence them." Again, "For weeks past," writes Sir Henry, "I have never seen one of the Turkish ministers without insisting upon the necessity of at once putting an end to the excesses, and the answer has been invariably the same. They [the Turkish ministers] deny that the cruelties have been upon a scale at all approaching to what they are represented; they point out that the horrors committed upon Turkish women and children are passed over in silence; and they plead that they had no alternative but to use the irregular force at their disposal to put down an unprovoked insurrection fomented from abroad, the authors of which are responsible for the sufferings which have been entailed upon both Christians and Mohammedans."

administrative reforms. The fatal fault of the Andrassy Note was that it was inopportune; but, inasmuch as it comprised and expressed what we believed were the measures which, if carried into effect, would adequately ameliorate the condition of the subjects of the Porte, we gave it our sanction, and thought it of some importance that all the leading states of Europe and the Porte itself should have agreed together in that conclusion.

"When the Berlin memorandum was submitted to us on a subsequent occasion, we felt it our duty to refuse our assent to it, because the Berlin memorandum calling upon Turkey to perform tasks which it was utterly impossible in its then condition to accomplish, announced that in the event of her failing to do these things the powers must have recourse to ulterior proceedings—*indirectly but unmistakably announcing the military occupation of the Turkish provinces.* That would have been a violation of the independence and territorial integrity of Turkey; and therefore we felt it our duty to reject the proposition. Subsequently, almost simultaneously, we were called upon by the queen's ambassador at the Porte, in the state of anarchy which prevailed in Turkey, to guard the Christian population of Constantinople from menaced dangers, and we agreed that the Mediterranean squadron should repair to Turkish waters. Considering that revolution was then impending in Constantinople, and having received intimation that wild and daring schemes were said to be in agitation, we did not think that a squadron of three or four ships was adequate to the circumstances, and we determined that the Mediterranean squadron should take the name of the Mediterranean fleet. The effect of the presence of that fleet tended to the tranquillity of the country; and I have yet to learn that this was a course of action which has met with the disapprobation of the people of England.

"The next occasion on which we had to come to a decision which involved the maintenance of this principle of the integrity and territorial independence of Turkey was when a proposition was made that Austria should occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina, that Russia should occupy the great region of Bulgaria, and at the same time that the united fleets of Europe should proceed to Constantinople. To that proposal we could not assent, because it violated the most solemn treaties to which England was a party; and a year having now elapsed, you will perceive, my lord, that, trying as have been the emergencies, and searching as have been the circumstances, so far as Great Britain is concerned, *the independence and territorial integrity of the Turkish empire have been maintained, and the general peace has been upheld.* So much for the first great purpose which Her Majesty's government proposed to themselves in the trying circumstances in which they found themselves. There was another great object, not so great as the maintenance of the general peace, but still one which appealed to our sympathy and demanded our most careful attention to secure such *an amelioration of the condition of the subjects of these provinces as, by their increasing prosperity and welfare, would add in the surest manner to the independence and integrity of the country, and prevent the occasion of future disturbances.* It was with this view that we accepted the Andrassy Note, which, though it was ineffective at that moment, remained a record—to which even Turkey had given her adhesion—of the measures that were necessary for the great object contemplated.

"Now, how have we acted in that behalf? The moment that Servia intimated to Her Majesty's government that her resources were exhausted, and she desired our good offices, we immediately took the necessary steps to mediate to obtain an armistice and a peace. We were successful in that mediation; and although Turkey, from unwillingness to treat with the revolted provinces

as belligerents, declined to enter into any armistice, we induced her to assent to a cessation of hostilities, and we also induced the other powers to accept the cessation instead of an armistice. No sooner had that been accomplished than Her Majesty's government proposed the terms upon which a peace might be negotiated. We proposed that, notwithstanding her defeat, the *status quo* should be restored in Servia; that the *status quo* should be restored in Montenegro; and, with regard to the revolted provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, we proposed that there should be institutions established which would give to the population some control over their own local affairs, and guarantees against the exercise of arbitrary authority. It was agreed that the scheme propounded in detail in the Andrassy Note should now be carried into effect. With regard to Bulgaria, we proposed also that its condition should be considered. At that moment, in September, there was no special reason whatever why peace should not have been obtained in a very brief time. Every power acceded to these propositions, and, I am bound to say, no power with more readiness and cordiality than Russia. But what happened? *An indignant burst of feeling in this country, excited by horrible events, created such a sensation and excitement that the people of Servia, and the friends of the people of Servia, really believed that the people of England had suddenly determined to give up the traditionary policy of the country which the eminent statesmen of Europe only five years ago—including the members of the late government—thought so highly of,* and Servia was induced to retract what she had expressed, and once more to engage in a sanguinary struggle which every friend of humanity must lament.

"But the time came when it was quite clear that they could no longer continue the war, and Her Majesty's government again used all their efforts. They never ceased to attempt to bring about a pacific settlement. What by common consent was most desired as its only foundation was the attainment of an armistice—a real, formal armistice, and not for a short period. The government of Russia expressed, indeed, their opinion that it should be for six months; but by the utmost effort, by a strain on their diplomatic action, we induced the Porte to accept our proposition, which was made in these terms—that there should be an armistice of not less than one month. The Porte assented, and said they would grant an armistice of five months, and we submitted that to the powers. Our surprise and disappointment were great when we found that the armistice was objected to on account of its length; but as we had asked for a long armistice, and said it was not to be shorter than a month—that was the *minimum*—we looked upon the answer of the Porte on the subject as an adequate and satisfactory answer, and felt that, in honour, we were bound not to press the Porte to change that decision; and, therefore, we declined to take any further step in the matter.

"Well, my lord mayor, you are acquainted with the course of events upon that subject that have occurred. After a considerable time an armistice was obtained. I have heard a good deal about an *ultimatum*. That is an ugly word when we are endeavouring to bring about a pacific settlement. But I believe, my lord, that the *ultimatum* was something in this case like bringing an action for debt when the whole sum claimed had previously been paid into court. However, here is the fact—on which, I think, I may congratulate the country—*we have an armistice.* An armistice is certainly not peace any more than courtship is wedlock; but in general it is the auspicious harbinger of a happy future. The armistice being obtained, Her Majesty's government lost no time in proposing to the powers to hold a conference. And in proposing this conference we have been of opinion that it was desirable it should be upon a broader basis than would be afforded by the mere assemblage of the same diplomatic charac-

ters who often take too local and limited a view of matters, and not always, I believe, to the cultivation of a too cordial understanding. Therefore, to bring to this conference something of the freshness and largeness of view which we flatter ourselves the statesmen of Europe are more likely to import into it, we have proposed that each of the powers should be represented on this occasion by an ambassador extraordinary as well as by the usual ambassadors. And with this object Her Majesty has been pleased to appoint my noble friend the Marquis of Salisbury to be her representative at the conference, which I am authorized in saying all the powers have now agreed to attend.

"My noble friend," continued Lord Beaconsfield, with that absence of all rancour which was so characteristic of his naturally generous temperament — "my noble friend possesses the complete confidence of his colleagues. They have confidence in his abilities, in his grasp of the subject, and in the tact and firmness of his character, and I have no doubt that he will use and exercise all his abilities to bring about that permanent peace in Europe which all statesmen agree can best be secured by adhering to the treaties which exist, knowing well—and none knows better than my noble friend—that the independence and territorial integrity of Turkey are not to be secured by mere pen-and-ink work. Unless the great body of the people find that they are under a government which studies their welfare and is proud of their prosperity, even the independence and integrity of a country must themselves vanish. But I am hopeful, in the present temper of Europe, we shall be able to accomplish the objects we have in view without those terrible appeals to war, of which, I think, we have heard too frequently and too much. As the lord mayor has told us to-night, there is no country so interested in the maintenance of peace as England. Peace is especially an English policy. She is not an aggressive power, for there is nothing which she desires. She covets no cities and no provinces. What she wishes is to maintain and to enjoy the unexampled empire which she has built up, and which it is her pride to remember exists as much upon sympathy as upon force. But although the *policy of England is peace, there is no country so well prepared for war as our own.* If she enters into conflict in a righteous cause—and I will not believe that England will go to war except for a righteous cause—if the contest is one which concerns her liberty, her independence, or her empire, her resources, I feel, are inexhaustible. She is not a country that, when she enters into a campaign, has to ask herself whether she can support a second or a third campaign. *She enters into a campaign which she will not terminate till right is done.* My lord mayor, I thank you on the part of my colleagues and myself for the great honour you have done us in drinking our healths to-day; and to all present I tender our best thanks for the manner in which the last toast has been received. We do not misinterpret the spirit in which it has been proposed and received. We are here in no party meeting, but in a large assemblage of our countrymen, for whose approbation we labour, and for whose interests we believe we are now exerting ourselves. I can say for myself and for them that we are sustained in our labours—the difficulties of which can scarcely be exaggerated—by the confidence that our countrymen will give us a fair trial, and put upon our conduct a liberal and just interpretation. For the approbation of our countrymen we work; and so long as we possess it, we feel we have a sure and certain reward."

This speech was loudly applauded. It proved that the cabinet had been in the past as anxious to preserve peace, and effect beneficial reforms in the Turkish empire, as had been the noisiest and wordiest of the agitators among the Opposition. It also showed that England, if necessary, was prepared to go to war, not for the preservation of Ottoman misrule, but for the

preservation of those barriers necessary to check the ambition of Russia. The patience and patriotism which Lord Beaconsfield had displayed throughout the recess, now had their full reward. The tactics of the atrocity-mongers were revealed in their full light; these disturbers among the Opposition had done their best to stimulate an agitation for their own scheming, selfish ends, and the indignation which they had hoped to excite against the prime minister recoiled upon themselves. Instead of helping the Government in pursuing their work of mercy, the Opposition had, by their credulity, by their factious conduct, and by their insane hate of the Ottoman empire, excited mischievous hopes which had only tended to prolong hostilities and impede the progress of negotiations. If it had not been for the pernicious and unstatesmanlike example set by Mr. Gladstone and his vindictive and short-sighted followers who followed his lead, Russia would not have been encouraged in her mischievous interference, Turkey would not have been rendered sullen and obstinate, and Servia would not have entered upon hostilities. The revolt, instead of being a civil war—merciless as are all civil wars—would have been limited to an insurrection, which would soon have been suppressed, and the desired reforms in the Ottoman empire, at the instigation of diplomacy, have been speedily carried into effect. This famous Guildhall speech distinctly showed that Lord Beaconsfield had accurately felt the pulse of the nation, and that the public passion aroused by his great rival had been as mischievous as it had been uncalled for.*

Late in November Lord Salisbury quitted London for Constantinople. The following instructions were to serve him as the bases of his deliberations—the independence and the integrity of the Ottoman empire were to be maintained; a declaration to be issued that the powers did not intend to seek for any territorial advantage, any exclusive influence, or any concession with regard to the commerce of their subjects which those of every other nation might not equally obtain. The basis of pacification to be proposed to the Porte to be as follows:—The *status quo* as regards Servia and Montenegro; a system of local or administrative autonomy to be granted by the Porte to Bosnia and Herzegovina; guarantees of a similar kind also to be provided against maladministration in Bulgaria, and the reforms already agreed to by the Porte to be introduced without delay. Then as to the lax manner in which Turkey was taking upon herself to punish the perpetrators of the outrages in Bulgaria, Lord Salisbury was instructed by the very government which, it was said, had denied the existence of the atrocities and was completely indifferent in the matter, to "convey to the Porte a further and very serious warning with regard to the manner in which the outrages committed on the population in Bulgaria are being allowed by the Turkish government to remain without adequate redress. Instead of examples having being made on the spot, the inquiries of the commission have been conducted at a distance from the scene of the principal outrages, and witnesses have had, consequently, to be summoned from a consider-

* "The influence of England ought to be paramount at Constantinople, and would be so, if properly exercised and directed. It might and ought to be used for the good, and in the interest of Turks, Christians, Jews, and all other races and sects alike. *That influence, men of high position in England have unfortunately done their very best to destroy by a foolish, irrational, and intolerant outcry against the Turks; forgetting that whilst it never has been and never could be exercised to uphold and maintain Turkish oppression, cruelty, and misrule, it may be all-powerful in restraining them, in insuring good government, and in obtaining justice and protection for all the subjects of the Porte.* It is difficult to understand how men, calling themselves Liberals, should advocate injustice or persecution against a whole race, merely because that race is not Christian; or that, because horrible cruelties have been inflicted upon Christians, therefore even more horrible and wholesale cruelties should be inflicted upon Mussulmans by an internecine war, which would renew the sufferings of the Christians also, and would only, if successful, end in their exchanging one master for another, an organised despotism for an irregular tyranny. Although these persons may deny that such is their intention, the policy advocated by Mr. Gladstone in his untoward pamphlet and re-echoed by men, happily of little consideration and influence in the country, could lead to no other result."—*Quarterly Review, January* 1877.

able distance, the proceedings being thus delayed, the effect of examples lost, and the ends of justice to a great extent frustrated. The conduct of the commission has also been in many other respects most unsatisfactory; the few members of it who have shown any capacity for judicial investigation have been checked and hindered by the interruptions of their colleagues, and months after the massacre of hundreds of women and children and of unarmed men, the commissioners are still considering whether such murders are crimes."

The deliberations of the conference, as we know, came to nought. The representatives of the powers recommended reforms; but Turkey, aware that at one time or another she would have to meet her foe in the field, and being under the impression that her interests were so bound up with the stability of the English empire that she never could be completely abandoned to her own resources, was sullen, and would yield nothing. The Ottoman constitution had been promulgated, by which it had been declared that the Sultan was to be a constitutional sovereign, the liberty of the subject was guaranteed, the press was to be free, the Mussulman and the Christian were to be equal in the eye of the law and eligible to all public offices, taxes were to be impartially distributed, ministers were to be held responsible, and a senate and a chamber of deputies were to be instituted. These reforms the Porte had granted, and she was satisfied; she declined to be coerced into making further concessions. Every demand made by the powers was discussed by the Turkish council, then postponed, and then firmly and decidedly refused. In vain the European plenipotentiaries yielded seven points out of nine; the Porte was not to be propitiated, and the cry of the Grand Council, in spite of the forcible pleading of their grand vizier Midhat Pasha, was still "no surrender."

The conference thus came to an end. It had met to establish an administrative autonomy and sound guarantees against bad administration in the revolted provinces, but since Turkey refused to grant such guarantees, the mission of the European representatives was of course terminated. The causes for this conduct on the part of the Porte have been variously given. Turkey, it has been alleged, was jealous of foreign interference; she believed that the resources of Russia were much crippled, and she keenly desired to wage war single-handed against her hereditary foe. "All we ask," she said, "is to be left alone face to face with Russia." Her request was complied with, and we know what came of it. "It seems to me," said Lord Salisbury subsequently, "as it must to everybody else, that the refusal of the Turks is a mystery, for the infatuation of that course seems to be so tremendous. I observe that the wonder at their conduct has been very general, for all kinds of excellent and extraordinary reasons have been suggested to explain it. To myself, certainly, it appears that one of the causes which led the Turks to this unfortunate resolution was the belief which was so sedulously fostered, I know not by whom, but by irresponsible advisers, that the power of Russia was broken, that the armies of Russia were suffering from disease, that the mobilisation had failed, and that, consequently, the fear of war was idle. They counted upon every possible contingency. Their traditional policy had been to maintain themselves by dividing the powers, and they imagined that the powers would still be divided, and that a general European war would save them." They were soon made to rue their temerity.

Parliament opened February 8, 1877. The speech from the throne was almost wholly occupied with references to the Eastern question. "The hostilities," said Her Majesty, "which before the close of last session had broken out between Turkey on the one hand, and Servia and Montenegro on the other, engaged my most serious attention, and I anxiously waited for an opportunity when my good offices, together with those of my allies, might be usefully

interposed. This opportunity presented itself by the solicitation of Servia for our mediation, the offer of which was ultimately entertained by the Porte. In the course of the negotiations I deemed it expedient to lay down and, in concert with the other powers, to submit to the Porte certain bases, upon which I held that not only peace might be brought about with the principalities, but the permanent pacification of the disturbed provinces, including Bulgaria, and the amelioration of their condition might be effected. Agreed to by the powers, they required to be expanded and worked out by negotiation or by conference, accompanied by an armistice. The Porte, though not accepting the bases, and proposing other terms, was willing to submit them to the equitable consideration of the powers. While proceeding to act in this mediation, I thought it right, after inquiring into the facts, to denounce to the Porte the excesses ascertained to have been committed in Bulgaria, and to express my reprobation of their perpetrators. An armistice being arranged, a conference met at Constantinople for the consideration of extended terms in accordance with the original bases, in which conference I was represented by a special envoy as well as by my ambassador. In taking these steps my object has throughout been to maintain the peace of Europe, and to bring about the better government of the disturbed provinces, without infringing upon the independence and integrity of the Ottoman empire. The proposals recommended by myself and my allies have not, I regret to say, been accepted by the Porte; but the result of the conference has been to show the existence of a general agreement among the European powers, which cannot fail to have a material effect upon the condition and government of Turkey. In the meantime the armistice between Turkey and the principalities has been prolonged and is still unexpired, and may, I trust, yet lead to the conclusion of an honourable peace."

The debate on the address in the Upper House, except for the hot and wild accusations directed against the government by the Duke of Argyll, was temperate and conciliatory. The fiery chieftain of the Campbells blamed ministers for not having resorted to force to compel the Turks to render justice to the Christians; he justified the rising of the insurgents against the authority of the Sultan, on the ground that "every insurrection against that government is a legitimate insurrection;" he declared that there would be no peace in Europe until the well-being of the Christians in the Ottoman empire had been secured; and he found fault with the action of the conference, attributing much of its failure to Lord Salisbury having consented to withdraw several of the demands he was authorized to bring forward, at the instigation of the Porte. This speech roused Lord Beaconsfield to address, for the first time, a few remarks to the peers. His maiden effort was brief and simple. The government had been blamed, he said, for not having employed coercion towards Turkey. Coercion was not the policy of England in reference to the Christian population of Turkey. "My own opinion is," he said, "that if we had had recourse to coercion, or if coercion had even been threatened, these massacres, which we so much deplore, would have been extended and aggravated." The Duke of Argyll, he continued, had treated the Eastern question as if it was solely confined to the condition of the Christian subjects of the Porte; yet in that question there were other matters to be considered.

"Surely," he said, "some of the elements of the distribution of power in the world are involved in it. It is a question in which is involved the existence of empires; and really it does appear to me we shall never come to its solution —which probably may happen in the lives of some whom I am now addressing, though not in my own—if we are to discard from it every political consideration and to believe that the only element with

which we have to deal is the amelioration of the condition of the Christian subjects of the Porte. To my mind it is quite clear that if the powers of Europe work in that direction only, and work as they probably would if they worked in that direction only without the energy necessary, their interference would only aggravate the condition of the Christian subjects of the Porte, and bring about those very calamities of which we have had such recent and such bitter experience." Then he warned that the question could only be dealt with—not by religious enthusiasts, not by philanthropists, not by petulant men of letters, not by prejudiced partisans, but by statesmen. "If this matter is really to be treated," said Lord Beaconsfield, "it must be treated by statesmen; we must accurately know who are to be responsible hereafter for the condition of the population; we must know what changes in the distribution of territory in the most important part of the globe are to be made as the consequence of this attempted solution; and it is only by considerations of that kind—*it is only by bringing our minds, free from all passion, to a calm and sagacious consideration of this subject, and viewing it as statesmen, that we can secure the great interests of this country, which are too often forgotten in declamatory views of circumstances with which we have to deal practically*—it is in this way only we can secure an amelioration in the condition of the population of the Ottoman empire."

An opportunity, however, was soon offered to Lord Beaconsfield to explain more fully the policy of the government upon the Eastern question. The Duke of Argyll was again the exponent of the discontent which prevailed among a minority of the Opposition. He wished to know whether the government intended to persevere with the instructions issued to Lord Salisbury at the assembling of the conference, or was the subject to be dropped? The cabinet had been weak and vacillating; and as the result of their feeble policy it appeared that the Turkish question was to be intrusted entirely to Russia. The question was a European one—for that object the Crimean war had been waged—and should not be left in the hands of one power. England was now isolated simply because she had throughout offered a determined opposition to a firm and effective concert of the European powers. His Grace then concluded with an appeal to the prime minister to connect the history of his government with the memory of some measure in favour of the Christian subjects of Turkey, which should alike preserve them from the barbarism of the Turks and the despotism of the Russians. Lord Beaconsfield concluded the debate which ensued upon the suggestions raised by the Duke of Argyll.

He began by explaining the position occupied by the Ottoman empire in Europe. "Let us for a moment," he said (February 20, 1877), "take a broad view of what has been the situation and the conduct of the government. We have been called upon, somewhat unexpectedly, to deal with the largest and the most difficult problem of modern politics. We have been called upon, as many eminent statesmen have been called upon before, to consider this—whether the Ottoman empire could maintain itself; or whether, after long and sanguinary wars, its vast possessions might be doomed to partition, which probably might affect, without any exaggeration, even the fate of empires. My lords, the policy of Europe on this question has been distinct, and is almost traditional. I say absolutely the policy of Europe, and not merely the policy of England, as it is sometimes described, has been this—that by the maintenance of the territorial integrity and independence o the Ottoman empire great calamities may be averted from Europe, wars may be prevented, and wars of no ordinary duration, and such a disturbance of the distribution of the power as might operate most disadvantageously to the general welfare.

The phrase, 'the territorial integrity and independence of the Ottoman empire,' has been frequently referred to to-night, and in language of derision. The noble duke in his opening speech alluded to it, and questioned—scarcely supposing there could be a doubt about—the propriety of the phrase. Another noble lord followed his example. But your lordships will remember it embodies a principle which has always been accepted by statesmen; and the proof of it is seen that in this very conference, whose proceedings we are called upon to consider to-night, the basis on which my noble friend (Lord Derby) achieved the great feat, which has been admired by the noble duke and his friends, of bringing all the powers to consent to this conference, was their recognition of the territorial integrity and independence of the Ottoman empire.

"Therefore this is not a mere phrase of newspapers, but it is one used by statesmen in authority, and it has recently been used by statesmen in authority in these very momentous transactions which are now the subject of our discussion. I think there is some misconception as to the meaning of these words. By recognizing the integrity of a country, you recognize the integrity of its possessions at the time that recognition takes place. It is often said how absurd it is to maintain the territorial integrity of Turkey, when Turkey has lost so many provinces and so many kingdoms. What country is there that has not been equally unfortunate in this respect? England has lost provinces—most precious provinces—and was there any time, even at the signature of the Act of Independence, when any English statesman would have hesitated to come forward and maintain the integrity of the British empire? Our gifted neighbours have recently lost two most valuable provinces; but I believe there is no man in France who is not prepared to die for the integrity of the French dominion. If I wished to carry the illustration further I might point to Austria, who too has lost provinces; but it would be astonishing if any one pretended it had no right to maintain the territorial integrity of its empire. So I hold we should view the territorial integrity of the Ottoman empire as a political and material fact. It may have lost Servia, Greece, the Danubian principalities, and more than one kingdom in Asia; still it has the right to maintain its territorial integrity, and its territorial integrity, as existing at this moment, is a political and material fact.

"I come now to the question of the independence of Turkey. That is an expression considered to be entirely indefensible. There is a great misapprehension in that view. When we recognize the 'independence of a country,' it is that we contemplate in that country a durable sovereignty; and such a durable sovereignty is not impaired by any partial or limited interference with its sovereign rights. For example, the independence of Turkey was not affected by the occupation of Syria; and I maintain further, that the independence of Turkey would not have been affected if the policy recommended by my noble friend at the conference had been adopted. Take an illustrative case—a case not of remote times, but of this century, and in the remembrance of our fathers. Take the case of Prussia. Prussia is one of the most powerful states in the world, certainly the most powerful state of the German empire. Only at the beginning of this century Prussia was subjected to more humiliating conditions than ever were imposed on Turkey. Her strong places were occupied by foreign garrisons; her sovereign was prevented exercising the precious privilege of enlisting his own subjects in his own defence—at least in this respect his powers were so limited that they amounted to no importance—and yet the independence of Prussia was not lost by these passing circumstances. Therefore I do protest that in discussing these vast questions which involve probably, as events proceed, principles and consequences which may have a great influence upon the condition of this

country and the destinies of its people, we do not too loosely adopt opinions which clearly have no solidity and substance in them. All the statesmen who have had to deal with these affairs have accepted, and maintained, and enforced the principle that we should uphold the territorial integrity and independence of Turkey as the best security for the peace of Europe.* Depart from that principle, and we leave the ship without a rudder in our discussions. What may happen in the future I pretend not to foresee; but at present Turkey is by treaty a member of the European concert, and we must deal with her by the full recognition of her rights and our own."

History repeats itself, and Lord Beaconsfield proceeded to lay before the House proof that the aspect of the Eastern question presented no wholly novel features. There was, he said, a parallel to the existing state of things. In 1862 there had been an insurrection in Herzegovina, stimulated by the Prince of Montenegro. On that occasion the chancellor of Russia addressed to the powers remonstrances precisely similar to those which he had despatched within the last few weeks. On that occasion Sir Henry Bulwer had expressed his belief that the revolt in Herzegovina was a conspiracy; and in a despatch to Lord Napier, then British ambassador at St. Petersburg, he had expounded that view with great fullness, and had declared that the English policy was that of maintaining the independence and integrity of the Ottoman empire, as provided by the various treaties on the subject. The question had been discussed in the House of Commons, and Lord Palmerston being unable to be present through indisposition, that view had been maintained by Mr. Gladstone. Again, when the treaty of 1856 was torn up, and the conference hastily summoned to cover that defeat of English foreign policy, although four months were occupied in its deliberations, the representatives at the conference found no reason for taking active steps on behalf of the Christian subjects of the Porte, whilst Lord Enfield, who was then under-secretary for foreign affairs, in the course of his vindication of the conduct of the governments of England and of Turkey, distinctly stated that "the Danubian provinces had secured autonomy, and the Christian subjects of the Porte were no longer as hostile to her rule as formerly." As late as 1871, therefore, said Lord Beaconsfield, the traditional policy of England had not changed. What, then, he asked, had occurred to change the views of the Opposition? There had been another revolt in Herzegovina, another stimulative action from the principality of Montenegro, and fresh complaints from the government of St. Petersburg of the conduct of the Porte towards its Christian subjects.

Lord Beaconsfield then proceeded to vindicate the conduct of the government throughout the past negotiations. That conduct had been prudent and circumspect. He stated the reasons he had before given why the government agreed to the Andrassy Note, and why it had refused to sanction the Berlin memorandum. Then he explained why the government had been so late in acquiring its information as to the Bulgarian atrocities. It was because, owing to the economy practised by the late cabinet, several parts of Turkey had been denuded of consular supervision, and consequently considerable time had to elapse before ministers were in possession of the necessary authentic information. He next came to the policy which Russia had proposed, and which he had felt it his duty to oppose.

"Now there were two great policies before us," he continued, "with regard to the Christian subjects of the Porte. There was the Russian plan, and it was one deserving of all respect. It was a plan for establishing a chain of autonomous states, tributary

* "The Ottoman empire," said the Duke of Wellington in 1829, "stands not for the benefit of the Turks, but of Christian Europe—not to preserve the Mohammedans in power, but to save Christians from a war of which neither the objects could be defined, nor the extent nor the duration calculated." For the same reasons the territorial integrity of the Ottoman empire was stoutly upheld by Lord Palmerston.

to the Porte, but in every other sense independent. No one can deny that was a large scheme worthy of statesmen and worthy of the deepest consideration. But the result of the deepest consideration which Her Majesty's government could give to it was, that they were forced entirely to disapprove of that scheme. This scheme of a chain of autonomous states in the Balkan country, and indeed in the whole of the country that during the last half century has been known as European Turkey, is a state of affairs that has existed before. The Turks did not slip from Asia and conquer Constantinople, as is sometimes mentioned in speeches at national conferences. It was very gradually that they entered and established in Europe. As a rising military power they obtained territories near the Black Sea, and ultimately entered into Thracia, and there they remained for some time in company with all these independent and autonomous states. There was, of course, an emperor at Constantinople; there was a king of Bulgaria; there was a king of Servia; there was a hospodar of Wallachia; there was a duke of Athens; and there was a prince of Corinth. And what happened? The new military power that had entered Europe gradually absorbed and conquered all these independent states; and having conquered these independent and autonomous states, these kingdoms and duchies, the empire of Constantinople being now limited to its matchless city, and to what in modern diplomatic language is called 'a cabbage garden,' was invested and fell. And it did occur to us that if there were a chain of autonomous states, and the possessors of Constantinople were again limited to 'a cabbage garden,' probably the same result might occur. Well, I do not pretend to say who first introduced this word autonomy into these negotiations. If we did we must bear the blame. But against this plan of the Russian court we proposed what was called administrative autonomy, and we defined that administrative autonomy to be institutions that would secure to the Christian subjects of the Porte some control over their local affairs, and some security against the excesses of arbitrary power."

That proposition, continued Lord Beaconsfield, would have been accepted by Russia had not the Servian war broken out. The next step in the negotiations was the conference, and it had failed, laughed the speaker, because it was said Lord Salisbury had not possessed the confidence of his colleagues. "He is supposed," said Lord Beaconsfield, "not to have had the confidence of his colleagues, because he seems to have been attacked by some newspapers generally supporting the administration, and because his colleagues have not written leading articles in his defence. Every public man is liable to such attacks. No one has been more attacked in the newspapers than myself. I dare say I have had as many leading articles, mainly of a vituperative nature, written against me as any one ever had. And yet I declare upon my honour that I do not know a single colleague who ever wrote a single line in my defence." And if the conference had failed, it was from no fault of Lord Salisbury. "Allow me to say," continued the prime minister, "when we are told that the conference was a failure, that certainly there was no failure of my noble friend in the principal object of his visit to Constantinople. When he went there what was the situation? Then the first *sine quâ non* was that Bulgaria should be occupied by a Russian army. We had a great many other demands of a similar kind. Who succeeded in obtaining the withdrawal of those unreasonable proposals? Why, my noble friend. My noble friend fell only into one error, which I should have fallen into myself, and I believe every member of this House would have done the same. He gave too much credit to the Turks for common sense, and he could not believe that when he made so admirable an arrangement in their favour they would

have lost so happy an opportunity." Lord Beaconsfield thus concluded:—

"It has been said that the people of this country are deeply interested in the humanitarian and philanthropic considerations involved in it. All must appreciate such feelings. But I am mistaken if there be not a yet deeper sentiment on the part of the people of this country, one with which I cannot doubt your lordships will ever sympathize, and that is—the determination to maintain the empire of England."

This was the only speech during the session which Lord Beaconsfield delivered upon the Eastern question. Whatever part he took in the conduct of the negotiations which preceded the hostilities between Russia and Turkey, he intrusted all explanations to his foreign secretary. Lord Derby and Lord Salisbury were the spokesmen of the policy of the cabinet in the Upper House, and the prime minister was content to remain silent. Indeed, during the session of 1877 Lord Beaconsfield was singularly reticent. Upon one subject only did he speak, and that was when a private matter had been turned into a national question by the hostile investigations of the Opposition—the appointment of Mr. Pigott to the stationery office. It was said to be the "old, old story" of a job perpetrated by a minister in acknowledgment of political support, and the purists among the Liberal party who had acquiesced in the "Collier scandal," and had sanctioned the "Ewelme rectory" preferment, were loud in their indignant denunciations.

According to the information laid before the House by certain aggrieved members of the Opposition, the case against the prime minister seemed apparently unanswerable. It appeared that a select committee of the House of Commons had recommended that the post of controller at the stationery office—one of the best permanent appointments in the civil service of the country—should, when a vacancy occurred, be filled by a practical stationer and printer; by one, in fact, whose past training qualified him to deal with the technical duties of the office. This recommendation Lord Beaconsfield set aside. A vacancy occurred in the stationery office; and instead of the "practical stationer and printer" suggested by the select committee, the prime minister promoted to the post Mr. Pigott, a junior clerk in the war office, simply and solely, alleged the Opposition, because that fortunate civil servant happened to be the son of a former vicar of Hughenden, who, "with his family, had rendered valuable assistance to the prime minister in the county which he had so long and so creditably represented." The appointment led to much adverse criticism in parliament, in the press, and throughout the country generally. The controllership of the stationery office had been hitherto considered as a reward for literary services to a political party. It had been held by Mr. M'Culloch, and it had been held by Mr. W. R. Greg, both distinguished men of letters, and now it was to be given to "a mere war office clerk." What, it was asked, had Mr. Pigott done that he should be selected to a post of so much influence, and of so much emolument? He was not a distinguished author; he was not a civil servant of wide experience; and, above all, what did he know of printing and stationery? Such an appointment, cried the *Times*, is "too splendidly audacious."

The matter, of course, came before parliament. Mr. Holms, the member for Hackney, introduced the subject to the House of Commons. He stated that the stationery office was one of those departments which, four years ago, had been investigated by a special committee appointed "to inquire into and report upon the existing principles and practice which, in the several public departments and bodies, regulate the purchase and sale of materials and stores." As the result of the investigation, it had been discovered that the department had been grossly mismanaged, numerous irregulari-

ties had taken place, and the most extravagant waste had prevailed. In the face of such evidence, the select committee, therefore, recommended that for the future the head of the stationery office should be one "practically as well acquainted with the trade as if he were a stationer." Why, then, asked Mr. Holms, had Lord Beaconsfield ignored the suggestions of the committee, and appointed, not a man of letters, not even an experienced civil servant, but a man who "was one of a hundred-and-one junior clerks in the war office, being sixty-ninth upon the list?" The only reason, he contended, that could be advanced for such unheard-of promotion was, that "Mr. Pigott was the son of the late rector of Hughenden, who, he believed, with his family had rendered valuable assistance to the premier."

Thus presented, it must be confessed, the appointment had an ugly look. By some mismanagement those who rose from the treasury bench, either because they deemed the matter too trivial, or because they were too confident of their majority, had not taken the precaution to make themselves fully acquainted with the facts of the case; and the defence tendered was consequently most weak and unsatisfactory. The result was that a vote of censure against Lord Beaconsfield was allowed to be carried upon this ill-defended charge by a majority of four.

Three days after this unexpected defeat, Lord Beaconsfield rose in the House of Lords to lay before his peers a vindication of his conduct. His answer left nothing to be desired, and was welcomed throughout the country by a unanimous chorus of approval. It proved, said the *Times*, that the prime minister's powers of defence were not impaired. According to the *Daily News*, a journal certainly not favourable to the Conservative party, the defence was complete. Indeed, never was refutation more thorough and satisfactory.

Lord Beaconsfield stated that he was perfectly aware of the suggestions made by the select committee with regard to the stationery office; some of those suggestions had been adopted, whilst others had been disregarded. Among the latter was the proposal that the controller of the department should possess a requisite technical knowledge of stationery and printing. It would have been impossible, contended Lord Beaconsfield, to have obtained the services of such a person, since no one connected with great commercial transactions would be tempted to accept a post, the salary of which hardly exceeded that of the manager of a first-rate commercial establishment. What were wanted for the discharge of the duties at the stationery office were considerable administrative ability, some official experience and capacity for labour, coupled with educational and moral qualities. A man with the mere technical knowledge of a printer and stationer would not be fitted for the post, as he would not possess those social and educational advantages necessary for one who was the head of a great public department. Nor was technical knowledge absolutely necessary, since there was in the stationery department a permanent body of men capable of supplying the controller with all the requisite information. Under the circumstances he had, therefore, come to the conclusion to give the post in the civil service as a reward of signal merit and industry. A list of names had been put before him; and from that list he had selected Mr. Pigott, though that gentleman was a total stranger to him. He had made that selection simply because he believed it would advance the public interest. Mr. Pigott was not "a mere war office clerk;" he had served as private secretary to various secretaries of state, and he had especially distinguished himself as secretary to more than one commission.* Such a man, said

* Mr. Pigott was not "a mere war office clerk." In 1870 he was private secretary to Lord Northbrook, and served with him during the session in which purchase was abolished, and until 1872 when Lord Northbrook went to India. Lord Northbrook publicly expressed his sense of Mr. Pigott's services. From 1872 to 1874 Mr. Pigott was private secretary to Lord Lansdowne, and from 1874 to 1875 was private secretary to Lord Pembroke. Again, from 1874 to 1876 Mr. Pigott served as secretary to the royal commission on army promotion. For his services connected with

Lord Beaconsfield, deserved to be promoted. Mr. Pigott had, however, tendered his resignation of the office newly conferred upon him; but as that gentleman was entirely dependent upon the state for his income, to accept such resignation would be to leave an able and deserving civil servant to absolute destitution. He therefore, said the prime minister, did not feel justified in accepting the resignation of Mr. Pigott. Lord Beaconsfield thus concluded:—

"My lords, it has been said in an assembly almost as classical as that which I am addressing, that this appointment was a 'job'—that the father of Mr. Pigott was the parson of my parish, that I had relations of long and intimate friendship with him, that he busied himself in county elections, and that in my earlier contests in the county with which I am connected I was indebted to his exertions. My lords, this is really a romance. Thirty years ago there was a vicar of my parish of the name of Pigott, and he certainly was father to Mr. Digby Pigott. He did not owe his preferment to me, nor was he ever under any obligation to me. Shortly after I succeeded to that property Mr. Pigott gave up the living and retired to a distant county. I have never had any relation with him. With regard to our intimate friendship and his electioneering assistance, all I know of his interference in county elections is that before he departed from the county of Buckingham he registered his vote against me. And, my lords, it is the truth—it may surprise you, but it is the truth—that *I have no personal acquaintance with his son, Mr. Pigott, who was appointed to this office the other day. I do not know him even by sight.*"

After this in every way most satisfactory explanation there was only one course to be adopted. The House of Commons rescinded its vote of censure*—a vote of censure which would never have been carried had those on the Treasury bench only taken the trouble to make themselves acquainted with the real facts of the case. Mr. Pigott retained his post; and by the reforms he has introduced, and the saving he has already effected in the stationery office, has fully justified his selection by Lord Beaconsfield for the appointment, and the high praise passed on him at the time by those cabinet ministers to whom he had acted as private secretary.

Though foreign affairs cast in the shade all details of domestic legislation, the government had not been idle as to the supervision of internal matters. In spite of the conduct of the Irish obstructives, who, since they could not gain their own ends, had determined to hamper by all the wiles in their power the progress of legislation, the more important of the measures mentioned at the commencement of the session, in the speech from the throne, had been successfully carried. The prisons' bill, which was a legacy of the previous session, was ushered in by Mr. Cross, and enrolled on the statute book. The object of the measure was to place our gaols under centralized instead of localized authority. It secured the uniform treatment of prisoners throughout the country, vested the prisons in the secretary of state, and charged their cost on the consolidated fund instead of on the rates. At the same time power was taken to enable the secretary of state to discontinue prisons, provided that in every county there should remain at least one gaol; also it was enacted that a visiting committee should be annually appointed for every prison. The measure has worked well, and has effected considerable economy in the administration of our prison system.

the report on the commission Mr. Pigott was publicly thanked by Mr. Gathorne Hardy in his Estimate speech. Such services scarcely come within the description of "a mere war office clerk."

* "The House," said Sir George Bowyer, "would be doing no more than a simple act of justice if they rescinded the resolution. The resolution was agreed to because the House thought the appointment was a job. But what was a job? Why, an appointment made to serve private interests as against the public interest. It having been shown that the resolution was founded on a mistake, it ought to be rescinded."

The Oxford and Cambridge Universities bill, which, like the prisons' bill, had been introduced in the previous session, was now consolidated into a single measure, and led to much criticism on questions of detail, especially as to the continuance of clerical fellowships. After considerable discussion the bill was passed; it placed ample power in the hands of the commissioners, though such power was to a certain extent controlled by the disinclination of parliament to countenance organic changes. To Lord Carnarvon was intrusted the South Africa confederation bill, which was somewhat hastily hurried through parliament in order to defeat the tactics of the Irish obstructives. The bill was in its nature permissive. It presented the general framework of the constitution of the future confederation, but left all details to be filled in after communication between the imperial government and the local representatives. It provided facilities for the union of the colonies—such union to be voluntary; and proposed that there should be a governor-general, a responsible ministry, a legislative council, and house of assembly. Each province was to be presided over by a chief executive officer, and all native questions were to be reserved for the sanction of the queen. Lord Carnarvon was of opinion that the scheme of confederation would be acceptable generally in South Africa, and that when carried out it would greatly contribute to the strength and prosperity of the colonies. The budget, in spite of the continued depression of trade, was satisfactory. "Although it is not a very brilliant result for a chancellor of the exchequer to arrive at," said Sir Stafford Northcote, "I may say that I find some consolation—and I may even say I rejoice—that I am in a position to say that though you have at present only a small surplus, yet there is no deficiency; and if there is no chance of any remission of taxation, there is on the other hand no necessity for any addition." As the session advanced it became impossible, owing to the delays occasioned by the policy of the Irish obstructives, for ministers to enrol on the statute-book several measures of which they had given notice; and the "massacre of the innocents" was, a few weeks after Easter, more than usually sweeping and destructive.

During the session Lord Beaconsfield was, as we have said, singularly silent. With the exception of his remarks upon the progress of the Eastern question, he scarcely spoke at all. The only subject not connected with foreign affairs on which he briefly addressed the House, was on the occasion of legislating for the prevention of railway accidents. Lord Bury had directed attention to the report of the royal commission on railway accidents, and had moved a resolution against the adoption of the suggestions of the commissioners. The prime minister opposed the resolution on the ground that it would be wiser to let the railway companies themselves carry out those improvements which the public safety required, and leave for future consideration, if necessary, the threat of compulsory legislation. Parliament was prorogued in the second week in August.

Meanwhile affairs in the East had become more and more threatening. With the departure of the plenipotentiaries from Constantinople the Eastern question assumed a new phase. The conference having failed, diplomacy again busied itself with the circulation of its despatches. Russia was the first in the field, and issued a circular note to her representatives at the various courts in Europe. She begged to know the intentions of the powers, now that Turkey had refused to pay heed to the representations of Europe. The Eastern question, said Russia, was a European question, which should and could only be solved by the unanimous accord of the great powers. The question had been reduced to one of humanity—to compel the Turkish government to rule the Christian subjects of the Sultan in a just and tolerant manner, so as not to expose Europe to a permanent

crisis, revolting to her conscience and disturbing her tranquillity. The conference had arrived at a complete understanding both respecting the conditions of peace and the reforms to be introduced; yet Ottoman government refused to listen to the firm and unanimous wish of Europe.

"Thus, after more than a year of diplomatic efforts," wrote Prince Gortschakoff, "demonstrating the price which the great powers attach to the pacification of the East, and the right which they possess of insuring it in view of the general interests involved, and their firm desire to obtain it by means of a European understanding, the cabinets again find themselves in the same position as at the commencement of this crisis, which is, however, still further aggravated by the blood that has been shed, the passions that have been raised, the ruins accumulated, and the prospect of an indefinite prolongation of the deplorable state of things which weighs upon Europe, and justly pre-occupies public opinion and the governments. The Porte pays no regard to its former engagements, to its duties as a member of the European concert, or to the unanimous wishes of the great powers. Far from having made a step towards a satisfactory solution, the state of the East has become worse, and remains a permanent menace for the peace of Europe, as well as for the sentiments of humanity, and the conscience of the Christian people. Under these circumstances, before deciding on the course which he may think right to follow, His Majesty the emperor wishes to know what course will be determined upon by the cabinets with whom we have acted up to the present, and with whom we desire, as far as possible, to continue proceeding in common accord. The object which the great powers have in view has been clearly defined by the acts of the conference. The refusal of the Turkish government touches the dignity and peace of Europe. It is important for us to know what the cabinets with which we have acted in concert until now intend to do in order to reply to this refusal, and to insure the execution of their wishes."

The result of this despatch was, after some two months' deliberation, to cause the powers to draw up a joint protocol upon the subject of Turkish affairs. In this document Turkey was again pressed to improve the condition of her Christian population, and to introduce the reforms she had already agreed upon in Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria. The frontiers of Montenegro were to be rectified, and the Bogana was to be open to free navigation. The Ottoman armies were to be replaced on a peace footing, and the representatives of the powers would carefully watch how Turkey carried her promises into effect. "If," concluded the protocol, "the hopes of the powers should once more be disappointed, and if the condition of the Christian subjects of the Sultan should not be improved in a manner to prevent the return of the complications which periodically disturb the peace of the East, they think it right to declare that such a state of affairs would be incompatible with their interests and those of Europe in general. In such case they reserve to themselves to consider in common as to the means which they may deem best fitted to secure the wellbeing of the Christian populations and the interests of the general peace." The document was dated March 31, 1877, and was signed by Germany, Austria, France, England, Italy, and Russia.

Two declarations, one made by Russia and the other by England, were annexed to the protocol. "If peace with Montenegro is concluded," said Count Schouvaloff, "and the Porte accepts the advice of Europe, and shows itself ready to replace its forces on a peace footing, and seriously to undertake the reforms mentioned in the protocol, let it send to St. Petersburg a special envoy to treat of disarmament, to which His Majesty the emperor would also on his part consent. If massacres similar to those which have stained Bulgaria with blood

take place, this would necessarily put a stop to the measures of demobilization." Then came the declaration of England. "Inasmuch," said Lord Derby, "as it is solely in the interests of European peace that Her Britannic Majesty's government have consented to sign the protocol proposed by that of Russia, it is understood beforehand that in the event of the object proposed not being attained—namely, reciprocal disarmament on the part of Russia and Turkey, and peace between them—the protocol in question shall be regarded as null and void."

To this dictation the Porte declined to submit. Turkey was still a power—neither conquered nor despairing—and she had no intention of placing herself under the tutelage and supervision of Europe; such a proceeding she deemed derogatory to her dignity and independence. Accordingly, she issued a circular note to the signatory powers, giving the reasons which led her to return a refusal to the demands of the protocol. She began, not without reason, by regretting that "the great friendly powers did not think it necessary to obtain the participation of the imperial government at their deliberations, although questions were discussed which concerned the most vital interests of the empire." She hoped that peace would ensue between the Porte and Montenegro, and stated that a rectification of frontier had already been proposed. "The imperial government is prepared to apply all the promised reforms; but these reforms, in conformity with the fundamental provisions of our constitution, cannot have a special or exclusive character, and it is in this spirit that the imperial government, in its full and entire liberty, will continue to apply its institutions." The armaments of Turkey had an exclusively defensive character; therefore, when the Porte saw Russia set the example of putting her armies on a peace footing, that example would at once be imitated by the Ottoman government. For the disturbances in Bulgaria Turkey was not responsible, since they were due to foreign instigation; consequently the Russian government would not be justified in making the demobilization of its armies dependent upon such contingencies. The Porte then concluded by appealing to the treaty of Paris. "The imperial government, in fact, is not aware how it can have deserved so ill of justice and civilization as to see itself placed in a humiliating position without example in the world. The treaty of Paris gave an explicit sanction to the principle of non-intervention. This treaty, which binds together the powers who participate in it as well as Turkey, cannot be abolished by a protocol in which Turkey has no share. And if Turkey appeals to the stipulations of the treaty of Paris, it is not that that treaty has created in her favour any rights which she would not possess without it, but rather for the purpose of calling attention to the grave reasons which, in the interests of the general peace of Europe, induced the powers twenty years ago to place the recognition of the inviolabilities of this empire's right to sovereignty under the guarantee of a collective promise. Strong in the justice of her cause, and trusting in God, she determines to ignore what has been decided without her and against her."

This refusal led to hostilities. Russia quitting the European concert, issued of her own accord a mainfesto declaring war against the Porte. There was no alternative before the Czar, said the Russian chancellor. All the proposals made to Turkey, as a result of the understanding come to between the cabinets of Europe, had been met by her with obstinate resistance. To the protocol she had returned a new refusal. There was, therefore, no other course to pursue between prolonging a state of things which the powers had declared to be incompatible with their interests and with those of Europe in general, and obtaining by force what the unanimous attempts of the cabinets had failed to secure from the Porte by persuasion. The latter appeared

the wiser plan to adopt, and Russia felt that in taking so grave a step she was fulfilling a duty imposed upon her by her own interests, and was at the same time consulting the views and interests of Europe. It was in vain that the powers—and especially England—remonstrated with the great northern empire, and accused her of violating the treaty of Paris. The opportunity was too favourable to Muscovite ambition to be lost, and so under cover of protecting the interests of the Sclavonic provinces of Turkey, but in reality to secure her own aggrandizement, Russia gave orders to her troops to cross the frontier, and the dogs of war were once more let loose in Europe.

The result of the conflict between two such unequal forces was never in doubt. At first the Ottoman gained a few triumphs, then the resources and superior strength of the Muscovite told their tale, and defeated in Europe and in Asia, the proud and brave Osmanli thought it prudent to appeal for intercession. "The imperial government," said the Porte, addressing the European powers, "is conscious of having done nothing to provoke war; it has done everything to avoid it; it has vainly sought to discover Russia's motives in her aggressive campaign. The Porte has shown its desire for improvement by reorganizing its judicial system, by devising reforms without distinction of race or religion, according to the constitution which has been everywhere well received. The state of war simply retards such reforms, and is disastrous to the country generally, destroying agricultural interests, killing industry, and ruining financial reorganizations. Independently of these arrangements for reform, what reason can there be for continuing the war? Russia has declared she is not animated by a spirit of conquest. The military honour of both sides must be abundantly satisfied. What object can there be in prolonging a contest ruinous to both countries? The moment has arrived for the belligerent powers to accept peace without affecting their dignity. Europe might now usefully interpose her good offices, since the Porte is ready to come to terms. The country is not at the end of its resources, and is still prepared to fight in its own defence; it is ready, moreover, to sacrifice all for the independence and integrity of the fatherland. But the Porte is desirous to stop the further effusion of blood, and therefore appeals to the feelings of justice which must animate the great powers, hoping they will receive these overtures favourably."

Whilst these hostilities were being waged, the policy which England had to adopt was clear and distinct. She had proclaimed that so long as the integrity and independence of the Ottoman empire did not suffer, her position would be that of neutrality. During the recess rumour was busy with its reports, and gossip, with all its mendacious distortions, was freely circulated. There were divisions, it was said, in the cabinet; the old feuds between Lord Salisbury and Lord Beaconsfield had sprung up; the advice of the war party had prevailed, and assistance was to be sent out to Turkey; and the like were copied from one newspaper into another, and echoed from one club to another. Yet there had been no truth in all this "hair-brained chatter of irresponsible frivolity." The policy of the government had been conditional neutrality, and in spite of Russian aggressiveness and Ottoman helplessness, there had been no occasion for ministers to change their tactics. Turkey, though crippled, nay, well-nigh crushed, was still entire and independent, and as long as those conditions were preserved, England was content to keep her word and hold herself aloof.

"No sooner had war been declared," said Lord Beaconsfield (November 9, 1877), on the occasion of the Mansion House banquet, "than Her Majesty's government felt it to be their duty to announce at once, in language which could not be mistaken, the policy which, under the circumstances, they intended to pursue. It was not a

policy framed for the occasion, and merely because war had been declared. It was a policy which, from the opportunities which had been afforded us for some time, we had deeply considered. That policy we unanimously adopted, that policy we have unanimously carried out, and from that policy we have never swerved. What, then, was that policy? It was a policy of conditional neutrality. In the circumstances of the case we did not believe it was to the honour or the interests of England or of Turkey that we should take any part in the impending contest. But while we announced that neutrality which we were prepared to observe, we declared at the same time that the neutrality must cease if British interests were assailed or menaced. Cosmopolitan critics—men who are the friends of every country save their own—have denounced this policy as a selfish policy. My lord mayor, *it is as selfish as patriotism.* But it is the policy of Her Majesty's government—it is the policy they have adopted from the first. It is the policy they have maintained, and it continues to be their policy to believe that it is their duty to protect British interests abroad; and it is a policy which they believe the people of this country have sanctioned and approved.

"I believe the policy of neutrality on the part of this country was not more for the benefit of England than it was for the benefit of Turkey. For some years it has been a dogma of diplomacy that Turkey was a craze, and not a fact; that its government was a phantom; that its people were effete; and that it was used merely by statesmen as a means to maintain a fictitious balance of power and secure the peace of Europe. If that were the case, a repetition on the part of Her Majesty's government of what took place in the Crimea would have been the greatest error; and if the people were effete and the government a pure fiction—why, then, the sooner that is proved in the eyes of the civilized world the better. . . . The independence of Turkey was a subject of ridicule a year ago; the independence of Turkey, whatever may be the fortunes of war—and war changes like the moon—is not doubted now. It has been proved by half a million of warriors, who have devoted their lives to their country without pay and without reward."

As to the prospects of peace, continued the premier somewhat sarcastically, he did not take the desponding view of some people. "I cannot forget that the Emperor of Russia, with a magnanimity characteristic of his truly elevated character, announced, on the eve of commencing this war, that his only object was to secure the safety and happiness of the Christian subjects of the Porte, and that he pledged his imperial word of honour that he sought no increase of territory. I cannot forget that His Highness the Sultan has declared in the most formal manner that he is prepared to secure all these changes which will give to the Christian subjects of the Porte that safety and that welfare which the Emperor of Russia desires. Therefore, when I find these statements made by those high authorities, and made in a manner so solemn and earnest, I think I have a right to say that peace ought not to be an impossible achievement and conclusion of the struggle. . . .

"But, my lord mayor, you may say to me, 'Have you really any hope; can you encourage the citizens of London on this occasion by giving them any hope of the restoration of peace between these two great powers?' I would say, in answer to such a question, that which was said by a wise and witty gentleman of the eighteenth century to a friend who came to him and told him of his troubles. That gentleman said he had no hope; and Horace Walpole answered, 'Try a little patience.' Now my lord mayor, with respect to the present war Her Majesty's government have both hope and patience; and I trust the time may not be far distant when, with the other powers of Europe, we may contribute

to a settlement which will not only secure peace, but also the independence of Turkey." When these remarks were made Plevna had not fallen, and the Porte had not pleaded for the intercession of the powers.

The year closed with a striking proof of the support and sympathy which the policy of Lord Beaconsfield received from the court. Her Majesty paid a visit to Hughenden, where she remained two hours, and before leaving planted a tree on the lawn in front of the house, to serve as a memorial of her visit. It is seldom that an English sovereign has accorded so marked an expression of political approval and personal regard to a minister. The royal visit greatly tended to increase and strengthen the popularity of Lord Beaconsfield throughout the country. The presence of Her Majesty at Hughenden was thus interpreted:—"The Crown has the fullest confidence in the policy of its chief adviser; it believes, in spite of all the reports to the contrary which private malice and political opposition circulate, that the prime minister is resolved to uphold the interests of the British empire, and to resent any conduct which places those interests in jeopardy; the government has been accused of indifference with regard to the investigation of the disturbances in Bulgaria, and with delay in demanding the redress of such grievances—the Crown is of opinion that such strictures are undeserved; the action of the prime minister, in his supervision of affairs in the East, has been stigmatized as aggressive and needlessly interfering—the Crown considers that action as only defensive and prudently vigilant; by honouring the chief of the cabinet with a personal visit, the Crown desires publicly to express the confidence it reposes in its ministers, and especially in the prescience and the patriotism of its leading and most responsible adviser."

CHAPTER XIV.

"PEACE WITH HONOUR."

THE advance of Russia after the fall of Plevna, the isolation of Turkey, and her proposals for an armistice, rendered it advisable that parliament should be assembled at an earlier period than had been arranged upon. The Houses met January 17, 1878, and the greater portion of the speech from the throne was naturally occupied with the topics relating to eastern affairs. "I have thought fit to assemble you," said the royal message, "before the usual period of meeting, in order that you might become acquainted with the efforts I have made to terminate the war now devastating Eastern Europe and Armenia, and that I might have the advice and assistance of my parliament in the present state of public affairs. You are aware that, after having unsuccessfully striven to avert that war, I declared my intention to observe neutrality in the contest, which I lamented but had failed to prevent, so long as the interests of my empire, as defined by my government, were not threatened. I expressed at the same time my earnest desire to avail myself of any opportunity which might present itself, for promoting a peaceful settlement of the questions at issue between the belligerent powers. The successes obtained by the Russian arms, both in Europe and in Asia, convinced the Porte that it should endeavour to bring to a close hostilities which were causing immense sufferings to its subjects. The government of the Sultan accordingly addressed to the neutral powers—parties to the treaties relating to the Turkish empire—an appeal for their good offices. It did not, however, appear to the majority of the powers thus addressed, that they could usefully comply with the request, and they communicated this opinion to the Porte. The Porte then determined on making a separate appeal to my government, and I at once agreed to make an inquiry of the Emperor of Russia, whether his Imperial Majesty would entertain overtures for peace. The emperor expressed in reply his earnest desire for peace, and stated at the same time his opinion as to the course which should be pursued for its attainment. Upon this subject communications have taken place between the governments of Russia and Turkey, through my good offices; and I earnestly trust that they may lead to a pacific solution of the points at issue, and to a termination of the war. No efforts on my part will be wanting to promote that result."

Then followed this somewhat ominous paragraph. "Hitherto, so far as the war has proceeded, neither of the belligerents has infringed the conditions on which my neutrality is founded; and I willingly believe that both parties are desirous to respect them, so far as it may be in their power. So long as these conditions are not infringed, my attitude will continue the same. But I cannot conceal from myself that, should hostilities be unfortunately prolonged, *some unexpected occurrence may render it incumbent on me to adopt measures of precaution.* Such measures could not be effectually taken without adequate preparation, and I trust to the liberality of my parliament to supply the means which may be required for the purpose."

After the address had been moved and seconded in the Upper House, Lord Granville rose to comment upon the conduct of the government. The important part, he said, in the speech from the throne was the

demand made for taking precautions in expectation of a possible eventuality—a demand which would excite a great deal of feeling throughout the country as being contrary to the expectation of peace. He complained of the isolation of England throughout all the past vacillating proceedings, consequent he said upon divisions in the cabinet, and trusted that the country was not about to drift into war. As for the protection of British interests, the highest interest of England, he exclaimed, was peace, though such interest was no monopoly of our country, but one in which every nation had a share. He considered the assembling of parliament at so early a period as unnecessary. The reason given for such a proceeding was because of the great change in the diplomatic state of affairs; but he inquired, if it was necessary to summon parliament, why had it not been called together within a week or ten days?

Lord Beaconsfield replied. After having justified the early meeting of parliament owing to the diplomatic situation at Constantinople, he proceeded to vindicate the government from the charges of vacillation and indecision which Lord Granville had brought against it. There had been, he said, no indecision, and there had been no difference of opinion in the cabinet. "From the very first," asserted Lord Beaconsfield, "there never has been any hesitation by Her Majesty's government, as to the course of policy which they would pursue with regard to those great occurrences taking place in Eastern Europe. Our policy was not a hasty policy. It was not dependent merely upon the Russians crossing the Pruth, or because some occurrences suddenly brought about a state of affairs which might not have been anticipated. Long before the war commenced—long before my noble friend [Lord Salisbury] attended the conference at Constantinople, we had foreseen the possibility of the great struggle occurring. We had to consider what was the duty of English statesmen, and what was the character of those British interests which might be affected by such a war, and what was the course we ought to pursue. We came, after long deliberation, to the conclusion that it was for the interest of this country to observe in that war a neutrality. In arriving at that conclusion, it was not merely the value of the fortress of Kars or of the port of Batoum that we alone considered. We had to take a large view of the then existing circumstances; we had to consider the policy and the condition of many other countries; and we arrived at the unanimous decision—not a hasty one, but a unanimous decision—that it was our duty to observe a policy of neutrality, in case of war between Russia and the Ottoman empire. From that policy we have never swerved."

Upon what ground then, asked the prime minister, had the government been accused of hesitation and ambiguity? Throughout ministers had declared their policy as one of conditional neutrality — the condition being that the interests of the country should not be imperilled; and from that policy they had never deviated nor would be induced to deviate.

Lord Beaconsfield then touched upon the accusation, that the government by their management of affairs had placed the country in a state of isolation. Where was the isolation he inquired? The Berlin memorandum was a document which had ceased to exist, because England had refused to sanction it. Did that look like isolation or want of influence? Then again England had not only joined a conference of the great powers, but had proposed that such a conference should assemble. Was that a sign of want of influence? Was that isolation? "If you really take a general view," said Lord Beaconsfield, "of what has occurred in all these transactions, the only power that has done anything—and it has done much —has been England; England, which you say is so isolated; England whose conduct defeated the Berlin memorandum; England whose suggestion called into existence the conference." It was England which ob-

tained the armistice for Servia. And it was England—not mighty Germany, not anxious Austria, not France husbanding her resources — but that "isolated" England which had interfered, so as to bring about the negotiation then being conducted which it was proposed might lead to peace. England, cried Lord Beaconsfield, had never isolated herself; she had never quitted the European concert. Two powers had, however, withdrawn from that concert—Russia and Turkey. By her rash and reckless conduct Turkey had repudiated her position and lost it. Then Russia, who was bound in every way by the most solemn treaties to take no action without first conferring with the signatories of the treaty of Paris, came forward, and she too quitted the European concert. But England had never withdrawn from it—had never been isolated.

"My lords, there are two kinds of isolation," said Lord Beaconsfield. "There is an isolation that comes from decay, that comes from infirmity, that is a sign of impending insignificance and all those symptoms which denote a falling or an expiring state. But there is also an isolation for a state which may arise from qualities very different —from self-confidence, from extreme energy, from abounding resources, and above all from the inspiration of a great cause. This country has before this been isolated. In the early years of this century it was isolated; but how and why was it isolated? It was isolated at the commencement of this century, because among the craven communities of Europe it alone asserted and vindicated the cause of national independence. It was a great cause which your forefathers then maintained; and however depressed trade may be, whatever may be the circumstances brought forward to enervate the national mind, whatever may be the considerations introduced to prevent you from acting as your forefathers then acted—it may be your duty to follow in their footsteps. If that cause were again at stake, if there were a power that threatened the peace of the world with a predominance fatal to public liberty and national independence, I feel confident that your lordships would not be afraid of the charge of being isolated, if you stood alone in maintaining such a cause and in fighting for such precious interests. . . . If we are called upon to vindicate our rights and to defend the interests of this country; if our present hopes and prospects of peace are baffled; if there be circumstances which demand that we should appeal to parliament again and again for means to vindicate the honour of the realm, and to preserve and maintain the interests of the empire, I am sure that Her Majesty's government will never hesitate to take that course."

The conduct of Russia in the East had fully justified the policy of Lord Beaconsfield, in being prepared for any emergency. On the fall of Plevna, the Russians marched further south and penetrated the Balkans. Between the invading force and the capital of the Ottoman empire there was now no obstacle. It was feared that the Russians would push on and make themselves masters of Constantinople. Turkey was in despair; since the European powers had declined to interest themselves in her fate, she felt that she was isolated and had to be dependent on her own resources and suggestions. She proposed an armistice which was agreed to, and despatched a plenipotentiary to the Russian head-quarters to discuss the preliminary conditions of peace, on which the truce was to be founded. Whilst these negotiations were proceeding the Russians still pressed forward, until their troops had almost reached the walls of Adrianople. The capital of the empire was panic-stricken, and a prey to the most discordant counsels. Ministers were deposed and a new cabinet formed; the Sultan was meditating flight: whilst the Softas, angry with the government, were agitating to create an urban revolt and threatening to set fire to the city. Happily suspense was set at rest and disaffection quieted, by the peace which was now signed at Adrianople. The terms, however, were severe. Bulgaria was to be established into a

principality; Roumania, Servia, and Montenegro were to be made independent; reforms were to be introduced into Bosnia and Herzegovina; a war indemnity was to be paid; the Danube fortresses were to be evacuated by the Turks; and lastly, an ulterior understanding was to be arrived at between Russia and Turkey as to the question of the Straits. "I desire peace as much as yourself," telegraphed the Czar to the Sultan; "but it is necessary for me, and it is necessary for us, that it should be a solid and enduring peace."

A step was now taken by the English government, which unfortunately led to a division of opinion in the cabinet. For the protection of the large colony of British residents in Constantinople the English fleet, then lying at anchor in Besika Bay, had been ordered to steam through the Straits and proceed to Constantinople. This move was strongly disapproved of by Lord Carnarvon, who, finding all remonstrances ineffectual, felt he had no alternative but to resign office, and accordingly laid before his peers the reasons which induced him to withdraw from the cabinet.

In reply Lord Beaconsfield said (January 25, 1878) he was at a loss to comprehend the reasons alleged for the retirement of his late colleague. The proposition that the fleet should go into Turkish waters was not a deviation from the policy which the government had hitherto pursued. The policy of the government was one of *conditional neutrality;* and it had been expressly laid down in despatch after despatch that any movement which put in danger the city of Constantinople, or interfered with the navigation of the Dardanelles, would not be viewed by England with indifference. The fleet had been sent into Turkish waters to protect certain British interests, according to the great principle of the policy which the government had consistently and unanimously advocated. "I deeply regret," said Lord Beaconsfield, "that my noble friend should have thought that the mode in which we attempted to vindicate the national interests in reference to Constantinople, the Straits, and the Dardanelles was such as should deprive us of his valuable services and companionship; but I must vindicate myself and my colleagues, when I say that we were not conscious that, in the advice which we gave to the sovereign to send the fleet into Turkish waters, we were doing anything but supporting that policy which we had frankly expounded to this and the other House of Parliament, which parliament had adopted frankly, and which the country has contentedly up to this moment upheld us in maintaining. . . . Although I deeply regret that proposing these measures should have deprived me of such a colleague as the noble earl, I must tell the House frankly that they are part of the consistent policy of Her Majesty's government; that we are resolved to pursue the policy which we originally announced; and that we are prepared to observe that neutrality which we have loudly proclaimed and which has been generally accepted. *But if neutrality depends on holding that the great interests of this country are not to be maintained and vindicated, then I am no longer in favour of neutrality, but in favour of the interests of the country and the honour of the sovereign.*"

Sir Michael Hicks-Beach now succeeded Lord Carnarvon at the Colonial Office.

The fleet, however, did not proceed to Constantinople; on receipt of the conditions of peace proposed by Russia to Turkey the order was withdrawn, and the admiral directed to remain at Besika Bay until further instructions. The intention of despatching the fleet to Constantinople had also been opposed by Lord Derby; and the foreign secretary was about to follow the example of Lord Carnarvon, had not circumstances for the moment caused the government to abandon their resolve.

The situation was, however, of such extreme delicacy, that it became necessary for England to be prepared for any emergency that might arise. Sir Stafford Northcote accordingly asked for a vote of

credit for £6,000,000, in order that the country should not be taken by surprise, or be destitute of resources at a moment when the fortunes of Europe were in so critical a condition. This request led to much discussion, and to no little agitation throughout the country. The nation was divided into two distinct camps—the war party and the peace party. The war party were not anxious for hostilities, but considering that the occasion might arise when the dispute could only be settled by aggressive interference, it appeared to them only common prudence not to be taken unawares should Russia, intoxicated by her victories, impose terms which the Porte could not accept; then in default, should the great northern power seize Constantinople, assume command of the Dardanelles, and acquire the coveted ports on the Black Sea, it would be the bounden duty of England, who had pledged herself to maintain the integrity and independence of Turkey, to offer naval and military aid to the Porte. How could she accord this assistance, unless she had the necessary supplies at her disposal? Forewarned was to be forearmed; and the command of £6,000,000 could not but influence the decisions of the councils of Europe, and prove that England was not only earnest in her opposition to Muscovite intrigues, but possessed the necessary sinews to resist them. The views of this party were supposed to be summed up in the refrain of a music hall ballad very popular at the time:—

> "We don't want to fight, but by Jingo! if we do,
> We've got the ships, we've got the men, we've got the money too."

On the other hand, the peace party warmly opposed the vote of credit. There was no need, they said, for the grant; the conditions of our neutrality had not been infringed, and nothing justified our departure from the policy of peace. Mr. Bright, as a commercial man, took the commercial view of the situation—business before patriotism. He alluded to the difficulty manufacturers found in finding employment for their work people, and urged the government "to be extremely careful that not one single word is said, not one single act done, that can shake confidence in business, and can bring an increase of the troubles—the inevitable troubles—with which for a time we are likely to be surrounded." It was the old old story, "the greatest happiness of the greatest number, the greatest number, number one." Trade was bad; Mr. Bright was a manufacturer, and therefore regarded the political situation from the lofty and disinterested position—of business. Yet it may be urged that the one object which impels nations to go to war is neither to ruin trade nor to bolster it up; but to preserve the great interests which they have at stake, to carry out the guarantees they have pledged themselves to fulfil, and to maintain the policy they consider most beneficial for the future welfare of their country. It was to preserve "business," and that alone, which had caused the government of Mr. Gladstone to be an object of scorn and derision throughout Europe, and which had led to its overthrow amid the contempt and dissatisfaction of all classes —"business men," somewhat ungenerously, being among its most bitter detractors.

Mr. Lowe politely recommended a "simple remedy" to his hearers. "Muzzle your prime minister. If you cannot do that, let it be known that in these frisky hours he does not represent the opinions of the government." Mr. Gladstone also forgot his manners in the passion of his spite. "My purpose has been," he said, speaking at Oxford against the vote, and proving how personal was his antagonism, "to the best of my power, day and night, week by week, month by month, to counterwork what I believe to be the purposes of that man"—that man being his successful rival Lord Beaconsfield. The arguments, or rather the diatribes, of the Liberals did not succeed. The nation, as a majority, was strongly in favour of the Tory policy

—conditional neutrality, with the condition, however, to be observed and not evaded. The country was of the opinion of Mr. Gathorne Hardy, that the vote was a present expense incurred only to save much future outlay. "It may be," said Mr. Hardy, "that you grudge giving us these £6,000,000 now; but if you refuse them to us, perhaps you will have to spend £600,000,000 hereafter."

The vote of credit was carried through the House of Commons by a large majority. On moving the second reading of the measure in the Upper House, Lord Beaconsfield said, "What I wish to impress upon your lordships is this, that whatever may occur, whether we may be so fortunate as to contribute to an honourable and durable peace—and I can assure your lordships that no government is more ardently and arduously labouring for that result than the government of Her Majesty—or whether, on the other hand, those efforts may fail, and the war be extended and the area of hostilities even increased, there seems to be in either of those alternatives no doubt of the policy of this country—that she should be in a position to make her word respected, that she should not at this moment have recourse to feeble expression or inefficient action, but that she should, by the confidence and liberality of parliament, do what she thinks necessary to assert a sound policy. . . . I shall only express my own feeling, that whether England enters into conference or campaign, it is of the utmost importance that she should enter into it with the spirit and influence of a united people."

And now for the next few weeks England was worried and perplexed with rumours of all kinds as to the two great questions which absorbed all her thoughts and all her interest. Was there to be war with Russia, or was there not? For a time it seemed as if the answer was to be returned in the affirmative. The fleet, after various orders and counter-orders, had sailed from Besika Bay, and had anchored off Constantinople; at Woolwich the hands were working day and night; at Chatham the vessels there were being made ready to go to sea; and at Malta orders had been given for the men-of-war in the harbour to proceed with all haste to join the fleet off Constantinople. Lord Napier, of Magdala, had been summoned from Gibraltar to take command of the expedition in preparation; and Sir Garnet Wolseley was to be the chief of his staff. From this activity the public feared that war was inevitable. Then there came a lull, and the hopes of a peace were dominant. Diplomacy had stepped in and had been successful. The treaty of San Stefano had been signed between Russia and Turkey, securing for the Christian provinces almost complete independence of Turkey, and creating a new Bulgarian state with a port on the Ægean Sea.

But now a new difficulty arose; Lord Derby maintained that a European sanction must be given to this new settlement of affairs, and insisted that the clauses of the treaty of San Stefano should be submitted to the criticism of a congress of the European powers, such as Austria had already proposed. Once more anxiety prevailed. Russia had no objection to the congress suggested by Austria; she would send her representative to it; but she declined to submit *all* matters connected with the treaty she had signed either to its investigation or its dictation; she reserved to herself, in spite of her former pledges, the right of permitting or not permitting the discussion upon certain questions; the treaty simply concerned Turkey and herself, and was for herself and Turkey to settle. After such a resolve all ideas of a congress had of course to be abandoned, and England was compelled to make preparations for the worst. Her treasury was full; her troops were ready to march; her fleet was ready to sail; her next step was therefore to call out the reserve forces. And here again another division in the cabinet occurred. As Lord

Carnarvon had objected to the order commanding the Mediterranean fleet to steam up the Dardanelles, and had quitted office in consequence, so now Lord Derby objected to the decision summoning the aid of the reserves; and since the prime minister was firm on the point, and declined to change his resolve, the foreign secretary tendered his resignation. "My lords," said Lord Derby, explaining his retirement from office to the Peers, "the cabinet have arrived at certain conclusions which no doubt are of a grave and important character. In the measures which they propose I have not been able to concur. My lords, to prevent needless alarm from any words of mine, let me say at once that I do not consider that those measures necessarily or inevitably tend to bring about a state of war. I give those with whom I have acted entire credit for desiring as much as I desire the maintenance of the peace of Europe. We agree as to the end, but unhappily we differ as to the means; and I cannot in the exercise of my deliberate judgment—however willing and anxious I may be to submit that judgment to what I know to be in many respects the better opinion of my colleagues —I cannot consider the measures upon which they have decided as being prudent in the interests of European peace, or as being necessary for the safety of the country, or as being warranted by the state of matters abroad." This explanation was succeeded by the statement of the prime minister.

"My lords," said Lord Beaconsfield, in a voice penetrated with emotion (March 28, 1878), "as your lordships have just heard, the queen has lost to-day the services of one of the ablest of her counsellors. Those only who have served with my noble friend can sufficiently appreciate his capacity for affairs, the penetrating power of his intelligence, and the judicial impartiality of his general conduct. My lords, I have served with my noble friend in public life for more than a quarter of a century, and during that long period the cares of public life have been mitigated by the consolations of private friendship. A quarter of a century is a long period in the life of any man; and I can truly say that, so far as the relations between myself and my noble friend are concerned, those years have passed without a cloud. My noble friend has to-night, with prudence and perfect taste, avoided entering into the particular reasons that have induced him to take a step which on his part is so momentous, and which to the country must be of interest and importance. My lords, I shall be quite willing to refrain from entering into those topics myself, until the period when they may be legitimately considered by your lordships; but I have learnt that so much public mischief may occur from unnecessary mystery in these matters, that I feel it my duty to-day to say that in consequence of our belief that the congress would not meet, for reasons which it is now unnecessary to touch upon—especially as my noble friend, with a becoming candour, has admitted that upon this subject there was no difference of opinion between him and his late colleagues—it became matter of consideration for Her Majesty's government at a period like the present, when the balance of power in the Mediterranean is so disturbed, and when the hopes of rectifying that balance by the meeting of the congress seems altogether to have ceased, to decide what steps should be taken in order to countervail or resist the mischiefs which were impending. It is therefore in the interests of peace, and for the due protection of the rights of her empire, that we have thought it our duty to advise Her Majesty to avail herself of those powers which she has of calling on the services of her reserved forces. With that view a message will be laid before parliament, according to the provisions of the statute in the case.

"My lords, I felt it my duty to make this announcement; and when the occa-

sion—which of course is near—occurs, your lordships will have the opportunity of considering the whole question of the policy and of the conduct of Her Majesty's government. That we shall not be supported on that occasion by the abilities of my noble friend, who has been so long my companion, I deeply deplore. These wrenches of feeling are among the most terrible trials of public life; but we may draw from them at least one noble and consolatory inference—that the sense of duty in our public men is so great, that they can bear even these painful trials. My lords, I have felt of late that the political ties between myself and my noble friend must soon terminate; but I believed they would terminate in a very different and a more natural manner—that I should myself disappear from the scene, and that he would remain, in the maturity of manhood, with his great talents and experience, to take that leading part in public affairs for which he is so well qualified. We have lost his services. I personally, of all his colleagues, suffer most severely in that respect; but I am sustained by the feeling at the present moment, that I am conscious and confident that the policy which we have recommended Her Majesty to adopt is one which will tend to the maintenance of her empire, to the freedom of Europe, and to the greatness and security of this country." Lord Salisbury succeeded Lord Derby at the foreign office; Mr. Hardy, now created Viscount Cranbrook, was transferred to the India office; and Colonel Stanley, a brother of Lord Derby, took office as minister of war.

A few days after this secession Lord Beaconsfield laid before the Upper House the reasons which had caused him to arrive at the conclusion, that the reserves should be called out. He began (April, 8, 1878) by reading an extract from a despatch of Lord Derby in reply to a communication from Prince Gortschakoff, who had announced and vindicated the commencement of the war between Russia and Turkey.

"The course," wrote Lord Derby, "on which the Russian government has entered involves graver and more serious considerations. It is in contravention of the stipulation of the treaty of Paris of March 30, 1856, by which Russia and the other signatory powers engaged, each on its own part, to respect the independence and the territorial integrity of the Ottoman empire. In the conference of London of 1871, at the close of which the above stipulation with others was again confirmed, the Russian plenipotentiary, in common with those of the other powers, signed a declaration affirming it to be "*an essential principle of the law of nations that no power can liberate itself from the engagements of a treaty, nor modify the stipulations thereof, unless with the consent of the contracting parties by means of an amicable arrangement.*" In taking action against Turkey on his own part, and having recourse to arms without further consultation with his allies, the Emperor of Russia has separated himself from the European concert hitherto maintained, and has at the same time departed from the rule to which he himself had solemnly recorded his consent."

"My lords," said Lord Beaconsfield, "the reply from which I have read that extract is dated May 1, 1877; and it is of the greatest importance that the House should bear in mind that, at the commencement of the deplorable war which I trust has now ceased, this announcement was so deliberately made and this principle was vindicated in a manner so distinct by Her Majesty's government. My lords, the extract which I have read conveys *the keystone of our policy; it is the diapason of our diplomacy; upon it our policy was founded; and had those engagements been entered into by Russia, and had we not held her bound by those engagements in the face of Europe, no policy of neutrality would have been sanctioned by this country.* I believe, my lords, I may say that, not alone for this, but for other countries which adopted the same policy."

Lord Beaconsfield, then proceeded to lay before the House the course English diplomacy had adopted with regard to the independent negotiations entered into by Russia with Turkey. "Since I had the honour of addressing your lordships at the beginning of this session," he continued, "circumstances which were just then occurring and which continued afterwards have given a new aspect to the state of affairs. Those circumstances were as follows:—About that time Her Majesty's government received private information that negotiations were commencing or were about to commence between the belligerent powers. No sooner had that information reached us than the secretary of state addressed to Her Majesty's ambassador at St. Petersburg [Lord A. Loftus], instructions which were as follows, and were dated January 14:—

'Her Majesty's ambassador has been instructed to state to Prince Gortschakoff that, in order to avoid possible misconception and in view of reports which have reached Her Majesty's government, they are of opinion that *any treaty concluded between the governments of Russia and the Porte affecting the treaties of* 1856 *and* 1871 *must be a European treaty,* and would not be valid without the assent of the powers who were parties to those treaties.'

"My lords, on January 23, having received no answer from Russia with respect to those representations, the secretary of state, pressing for an answer, telegraphed in these terms:—

'Have you received an answer from the Russian government to the communication which you made on the 15th inst. respecting the validity of any future treaty?'

"On January 24, ten days after the original representations, Her Majesty's ambassador writes to say he had received no answer himself, and adds:—

'I presume Prince Gortschakoff regarded the communication as a statement to record the opinion of Her Majesty's government, which required no answer. If an answer was to be given, it would probably be made through the Russian ambassador in London.'

"Accordingly, my lords, on the day after that message was received, Count Schouvaloff read to my noble friend the following extract of a telegram from Prince Gortschakoff:—

'We repeat the assurance that we do not intend to settle by ourselves European questions having reference to the peace which is to be made.'

"Meanwhile, my lords, information reached us that negotiations were now being carried on between Russia and Turkish delegates at Kezanlik,* and that those negotiations were being conducted with the utmost secrecy, I may say mystery, which secrecy was held as against those who had religiously and honourably observed that policy of neutrality which had been promised by the secretary of state. In consequence of this, my lords, on January 29 the secretary of state addressed the following despatch to Lord A. Loftus:—

'I have to instruct your Excellency to state to the Russian government that Her Majesty's government, while recognizing any arrangements made by the Russian and Turkish delegates at Kezanlik for the conclusion of an armistice and for the settlement of bases of peace as binding between the two belligerents, declare that, in so far as those arrangements are calculated to modify European treaties and to affect general and British interests, they are *unable to recognize in them any validity unless they are made the subject of a formal agreement among the parties to the treaty of Paris.*'

"At the same time, my lords, the secretary of state sent the following circular in identical language to Her Majesty's ambassadors at the courts of Paris, Vienna, Berlin, and Rome. Your lordships will perceive that it contains an additional paragraph, but in other respects is sub-

* Immediately after the occupation of Kezanlik by generals Mirsky and Skobeloff, who had penetrated the Balkans by the Trajan Pass, secret negotiations were entered into between the Turkish plenipotentiaries and the Grand-duke Nicholas at Kezanlik.

stantially the same as the communication to Lord A. Loftus of January 29.

'I have to request that your Excellency will inform the government to which you are accredited that Her Majesty's government, while they are prepared to recognize any arrangements which may be made by the Russian delegates and those of Turkey at Kezanlik, with a view to the conclusion of an armistice and the settlement of bases of peace as binding between the two belligerents, declare, nevertheless, that in so far as such arrangements may be found calculated to modify European treaties, or to affect general interests, or those of Great Britain, they are unable to recognize in them *any validity unless they shall be made the subject of a formal agreement by the powers parties to the treaty of Paris.*

'Her Majesty's government entertain the hope that the view of the case above stated, which is entirely based upon the treaties, and more especially upon the treaty of London of 1871, will receive the assent of the other powers who were parties to those treaties.'

"At length, my lords, there came the following reply from the Russian government:—

'St. Petersburg: *January* 30, 1878.

"I have received your lordship's telegram of yesterday, containing a declaration relative to the question of the validity of the bases of peace, and I have this morning communicated the substance of it to Prince Gortschakoff. His Highness replied that to effect an armistice certain bases of peace were necessary, but they are only to be considered as preliminaries, and not definitive as regards Europe. His Highness stated categorically *that questions bearing on European interests will be concerted with European powers, and he had given Her Majesty's government clear and positive assurances to this effect.*'

"Those positive assurances were repeated in communications made by the Russian ambassador to this country; and I am bound to say, as so many remarks have been made on the conduct of that plenipotentiary, that I believe he has made no representations to Her Majesty's government which are not to be found in the instructions which he received from his own government.

"Well, my lords, this carried us through the month of January, the month in which parliament assembled, the month in which those negotiations between Russia and Turkey commenced, and the month in which was received that declaration from Prince Gortschakoff which Her Majesty's government was induced to regard as satisfactory." Lord Beaconsfield then proceeded to tell the history of the proposed meeting of the European powers to consider the question.

"Early in February," he continued, "a formal invitation was received by Her Majesty's government from the government of Austria to a conference to be held at Vienna. That communication was made with the knowledge of Russia, or to use the language of a despatch of the Austrian ambassador, Russia 'fully appreciated it;' and the object of the conference was stated to be the establishment of 'a European agreement as to the modifications which it might become necessary to introduce in existing treaties,' in order to make them harmonize with the present situation. Your lordships will observe the character in which this government, the government of Austria, and the other governments were to take part in the conference. Avowedly, it was in her character as a signatory of the treaties of 1856 that Austria addressed the invitation to the other powers, and it was in their character as signatories of those treaties that the other powers received that invitation. That carried us to the commencement of February, and the month which follows is not rich in diplomatic documents. But, my lords, it was not an uneventful month. During the whole of that period Austria was busy in conferring with the different courts of Europe, and in making arrangements for the meeting of the conference. There was the scheme of its meetings at Vienna; there was the objection of some of the powers to the meeting being held in a capital city. There were discussions as to

the presidency, as to the locality, and as to the name of the assembly, as to whether it should be held in a capital city or in a place of more obscure character, as to whether it should be called a conference or a congress, and as to whether it should be presided over by a secretary of state or by some other minister. All those questions occupied the minds of governments, but they did not occupy the minds of Her Majesty's government. Her Majesty's government never made the slightest objection. There were persons proposed whom we might not have approved as the best president; there were localities proposed which, perhaps, we did not approve as the best; but we never made any objection of the kind. We thought too much of the interests of peace and of the magnitude of the considerations involved in a meeting of a conference or congress; so that whether it was to be a conference or a congress, or whether it was to be held at Vienna, as originally proposed, or at Baden, or at Berlin, or who was to preside over it, were matters which Her Majesty's government put on one side, because we were anxious that there should be such a meeting, believing that by it a means of securing the peace of Europe might be obtained.

"My lords, an invitation arrived from Austria to a congress at Berlin, the objection to a capital city having, it appears, been waived. Well, we stated without a moment's delay that we would accept it, and we did not for a moment ask why Berlin should be preferred to Vienna. All we wanted was that there should be such a meeting. But mindful as we were of the events which had been occurring during the month of February when Austria was carrying on those negotiations; remembering that during the whole of that time secret negotiations were being carried on between Russia and the Porte; remembering the fact that during the whole time while those secret negotiations were proceeding the Russian army was advancing, and, if not occupying, encircling the capital of Turkey; and remembering that we had felt it our duty to advise Her Majesty to send a portion of the fleet to the Dardanelles—we considered it was of importance when we assented to attending a congress at Berlin that the policy of Her Majesty's government should be stated in an unmistakable form, and the secretary of state on March 4, while agreeing to that proposition, expressed to Count Beust the views of Her Majesty's government in these terms:—

'Her Majesty's government, however, consider that it would be desirable to have it understood in the first place, that *all questions dealt with in the treaty of peace between Russia and Turkey should be considered as subjects to be discussed in the congress*, and that no alteration in the condition of things previously established by treaty should be acknowledged as valid, until it has received the assent of the powers.'

"I think, my lords, I have shown you that in the eventful month that elapsed from the time to which I before alluded, Her Majesty's government were consistently maintaining that great principle which they had vindicated before the war commenced, which they had repeated on other occasions, and which on this occasion, when the meeting of the congress appeared to be settled upon generally, they felt it their duty to again affirm in the terms I have just read to the House. A day or two afterwards — in consequence, probably, of some rumours which may have reached us or of some slight indications of feeling which it was impossible to record, but which the observant critic would not fail to remark—the secretary of state wrote in this language to Her Majesty's ambassador at Vienna:—

'I have to request your Excellency to inform Count Andrassy that, in order to avoid any misapprehension as to the meaning of their recent declaration contained in my note to Count Beust of the 9th inst., Her Majesty's government desire to state that they must distinctly understand, before they enter into congress, that *every article in the treaty between Russia and*

Turkey will be placed before the congress, not necessarily for acceptance, but in order that it may be considered what articles require acceptance or concurrence by the several powers and what do not.'

"Now, my lords, after some slight delay, we received a memorandum from Prince Gortschakoff which was communicated by Lord A. Loftus on March 17:—

'In answer to the communication by Lord Augustus Loftus of the despatch in which Lord Derby has answered the proposal of Count Beust respecting the meeting of a congress at Berlin, I have the honour to repeat the assurance which Count Schouvaloff has already been instructed to give to the government of Her Britannic Majesty—namely, that the preliminary treaty of peace concluded between Russia and Turkey will be textually communicated to the great powers before the meeting of the congress, and that in the congress itself each power will have the full liberty of its appreciations and of its action ("*la pleine liberté de ses appréciations et de son action*").'

"Now, My lords, I may not, perhaps, be an impartial judge, but I must say that the phrase '*la pleine liberté de ses appréciations et de son action*' was one of which I was not able to form a very clear conception. As to what '*appreciation*' and '*action*' may be, no doubt different interpretations may be furnished. It is a phrase involved in some degree of classical ambiguity. Delphi itself could hardly have been more perplexing and august. Well, my lords, Her Majesty's government could place only one interpretation on that communication. However ambiguous the language of previous despatches, however various the expressions that had been used, there was nothing in the previous correspondence between the two courts to induce us to assume that there would be a refusal on the part of Russia to that which England believed to be a natural, just, and indispensable condition of her entering into the congress. We are to understand by implication that, now for the first time, there was ground for that assumption."

Lord Beaconsfield next proceeded briefly to criticse the clauses of the San Stefano treaty:—"My lords, let me make one or two remarks on the character of this treaty of San Stefano, which Her Majesty's government felt so necessary to be submitted to the congress, and which we believed—and I think we believed so in common with the other powers—Russia was bound by the treaties of 1856 and 1871 to submit to the congress. The treaty is in your lordships' hands, and therefore I will not enter into a minute criticism of its every article; but it is necessary that I should put before your lordships some of its provisions, because, unless they be clear in your lordships' minds, you would hardly be in a position to impartially decide as to the consequences to which the treaty would lead, and as to the course which in respect of it Her Majesty's government have thought it their duty to pursue.

"The treaty is one of twenty-seven or twenty-nine articles, and with the exception of a merely technical one, *every one of them is a deviation from the articles of the treaties of* 1856 *and* 1871. I do not say that every article of the treaty of San Stefano would be a violation of the treaties of 1856 and 1871, because that would be a hard phrase. If the government of Russia were prepared, as we believed they were prepared, to place the treaty of San Stefano before the congress, I should look at the deviations between the treaty of San Stefano and the treaties of 1856 and 1871, not as violations, but rather as suggestions of the Russian government to be laid before the congress in order that they might be considered, and if just, be adopted by the other powers of Europe. But let us look at what this treaty does—this treaty which was negotiated in such secrecy and encircled in mystery to such a degree, that the Porte was commanded by Russia *not to let a single article of it be known to the neutral powers, without whose neutrality she could not have gained the advantages she enjoyed,* and which would not have been shown

unless it had been believed that, as regarded the other powers, Russia would feel bound by the treaties of 1856 and 1871. Well, my lords, the treaty of San Stefano *completely abrogates what is known as Turkey in Europe; it abolishes the dominion of the Ottoman empire in Europe; it creates a large state which, under the name of Bulgaria, is inhabited by many races not Bulgarians. This Bulgaria goes to the shores of the Black Sea and seizes the ports of that sea; it extends to the coast of the Ægean, and appropriates the ports of that coast. The treaty provides for the government of this new Bulgaria, under a prince who is to be selected by Russia; its administration is to be organized and supervised by a commissary of Russia; and this new state is to be garrisoned, I say for an indefinite period, but at all events for two years certain, by Russia.*

"My lords, it is not merely this vast district, this vast space of country, which is taken from the Porte, for which the power and the government of Russia is substituted by the stipulations in this treaty; but for the distant provinces of Bosnia, and Epirus, and Thessaly there are instituted new laws, which are to be revised by Russia and afterwards supervised by Russia; so that we say all the European dominions of the Ottoman Porte are taken from the Porte and put under the administration of Russia. My lords, it is not difficult to see that the effect of all the stipulations combined will be to make the Black Sea as much a Russian lake as the Caspian. The harbour of Batoum, which is still in possession of the Porte, is seized by Russia, all the strongholds in Armenia are seized by Russia, and the portion of that great province nominally left to Turkey will be governed by law supervised by Russia. The next point which I feel it necessary to bring under the consideration of your lordships, is that of the claim of Russia to the district of Bessarabia, of which she was deprived after the Crimean war. My lords, I need not recall to your recollection the distressing circumstances which are now arriving and which have arrived with reference to that portion of the treaty of San Stefano; but I want to point out to your lordships, that here it is not a matter of trifling or local interest which is at stake. The clause in the treaty of Paris with regard to the cession of Bessarabia was one on which Lord Palmerston placed the utmost stress, and to which he attached the very greatest importance. It involved the emancipation of the Danube; and accordingly Lord Palmerston treated it as an article, not of local, but of European interest. It was inserted in the original preliminaries of the treaty, and an attempt was made by Russia to evade it; but Lord Palmerston attached such importance to it, that the congress of Paris was nearly breaking up because of the efforts made not to have that article carried into effect

"The great interest felt at the congress of Paris in taking security against the closing of those seas and the closing of the Danube, is a matter which your lordships will bear in mind when examining the treaty of San Stefano. The large European commerce which is now carried on from Trebizond to Russia and Central Asia may be stopped at the pleasure of Russia in consequence of cessions in Kurdistan. But what would be the consequence of the treaty if carried out with reference to the navigation of the Straits? By that treaty the Sultan of Turkey is reduced to a state of absolute subjugation to Russia; and either as to the opening of the navigation of the Black Sea, or as to all those rights and privileges with which the Sultan was invested as an independent sovereign, he would be no longer in the position in which he was placed by the European treaties. We therefore protest against an arrangement which practically would place at the command of Russia, and Russia alone, that unrivalled situation and its resources which the European Powers placed under the government of the Porte.

"Now, my lords, this treaty was signed on March 3, but it was not delivered to

Her Majesty's government till March 23. I do not say that during the interval we had not by extraordinary means obtained some knowledge of its provisions, but that was knowledge on which we could not absolutely rely; it was knowledge which, like all knowledge acquired in that way, was likely to be in some degree erroneous. But, at all events, it allowed us to avail ourselves of the earliest opportunity of endeavouring to avert what we conceived to be mischievous results to all Europe. My lords, we still hoped and still believed that a congress might be obtained, and we looked to it as the only means by which the unsatisfactory state of public affairs might be remedied. We were prepared, if all the Powers entered into the congress, and if it were a *bonâ fide* congress, and in accordance with the positive engagements as we believed of Russia—we were prepared, I say, to see the treaty of San Stefano submitted to discussion by that congress in order that, to use the words of the Austrian government, a *réglément définitif* of the conditions of future peace might be arrived at.

"It appeared to us that the circumstances of the world were not unfavourable to that. All the great powers of Europe during the last ten years, except England, unfortunately for them, had been involved in fearful wars, and were suffering from the exhaustion attendant on such wars; and we believed that, with the general and natural inclination for peace arising from such circumstances, the discussions of a congress, carried on as a European congress would be, would prove favourable to a satisfactory solution of difficulties. And, my lords, we, as far as we were concerned, had a due consideration for the circumstances in which Russia was placed, in consequence of the war between her and Turkey, because we could not expect that Russia would appear at the congress merely in the same character as she assumed when she became a signatory to the treaties of 1856 and 1871. We were prepared to consider the events that had occurred; but having regard to the temper with which we expected that the proposals of Russia would be considered, we believed that Russia would not disappoint the other powers. We regarded it as being for her own advantage to comply with the engagements into which she had entered; and that, acting as she had agreed to act by the treaties of 1856 and 1871, she would have placed before the congress the stipulations of all the articles of the treaty.

"My lords, these hopes were disappointed, and it was when these hopes were disappointed, and when we found there was no chance, by the aid of treaties or by the public law of Europe, to bring about a settlement of those great affairs, that we had to consider what was our duty. My lords, the congress could not meet after that refusal on the part of Russia to conform to her engagements under previous treaties, and the conditions which England put forward when the treaty of San Stefano was placed before the European powers were conditions which she could never relinquish. The justice of them has been universally acknowledged. It is not denied even by Russia. What, then, was the state of affairs? No congress was to meet, and a most important portion of Eastern Europe and a considerable portion of Western Asia were either occupied by an invading army or were in a state of actual rebellion. It was impossible to say what might not occur in circumstances of such difficulty and distress. My lords, the country in which these events were occurring is a country which has always been subject to strange and startling vicissitudes. In the East there is only one step between collapse and convulsion, and it was possible that, with the British fleet in the Dardanelles, the chief highway between Europe and Asia might be seized, and that the commercial road from Trebizond to Persia might be stopped.

"We know that, if not in the memory of the present generation, certainly in the memory of some members of your Lord-

ships' House, armies marched through Syria and through Asia without firing a shot, and held Constantinople in a state of trepidation. Why not march armies in the same way, and hold Egypt and the Suez Canal in the same state of trepidation as Constantinople and the Bosphorus was held at that time? In those circumstances there was, in our opinion, only one course to take. When everything was unsettled; when there was no prospect of a settlement; when there seemed no probability of the treaty of San Stefano being submitted for discussion to the European Powers, and of the public law being vindicated; *when all Europe was armed, was England to be disarmed? Was England to be deterred from doing her duty to herself and to Europe by taunts and threats—because we were told that we were menacing when we thought to conciliate*? My lords, our fleet, which has reached the waters of the Dardanelles, has acted in a manner worthy of it, and in the manner it might have been expected to act; but I have always thought that when it is found necessary to show our strength, certainly England should not be limited to one of her services—that she should appeal to her military force to maintain her honour and her interests, as well as to her marine.

"Well, my noble lords, in those circumstances we felt it our duty to advise Her Majesty to send the message* to your Lordships' House, the answer to which I am about to propose. And here let me make one remark upon the act of the sovereign in that particular. It is the first time the sovereign of this country has sent down such a message to parliament, because this message is in virtue of an Act of Parliament which was passed only a very few years ago. That Act was in consequence of a great military reform, which was inaugurated by the last government, and particularly by the noble viscount [Lord Cardwell] opposite. My lords, that great military reform gave rise to much controversy and opposition in the country; but, as has been the case in respect of all great Acts of our legislature, when it became law every man on both sides exerted himself to carry it into effect. I am sure that during the experience of the present government—and that has not been a short one—there has been an unceasing effort to carry into effect the measures and policy of the noble viscount opposite. I feel at liberty to speak on this point, because it is my lot to differ from many of my friends in this matter. The great principle which is the foundation of the reserve system—the principle of short service—is one which I have had the honour to support. Well, my lords, it is in consequence of that reform in our military system, and the institution of short service, that we are obliged to recommend Her Majesty to call out our reserves. Under the new military system it was laid down that a battalion in time of war or on active service should consist of not less than 1000 men. A battalion in time of peace consists of only 500 men, and therefore the machinery of reserves, the arrangement introduced by the noble lord opposite, that there should be with this short service a means by which when men passed through their short service and left their colours they might become, under another title, the soldiers of Her Majesty, was the only means by which you could convert our battalions of 500 men, in case of emergency, into battalions of 1000 men, who should not be mere raw recruits.

"Now, unfortunately, the name for this force is not a very felicitous one; it is called the Reserve Force, and it is called the Militia Reserve Force; and the world associates with the word 'reserves' some

* Thus ran the message:—"The present state of public affairs in the East, and the necessity in connection therewith of taking steps for the maintenance of peace and for the protection of the interests of the empire, having constituted, in the opinion of Her Majesty, a case of great emergency within the meaning of the Acts of Parliament in that behalf, Her Majesty deems it proper to provide additional means for her military service; and therefore, in pursuance of those Acts, Her Majesty has thought it right to communicate to the House of Commons that Her Majesty is about to cause her Reserve Force and the Militia Reserve Force, or such part thereof as Her Majesty shall think necessary, to be forthwith called out for permanent service."

resource that is left to the last, that is only to be appealed to in great emergency, and is to be the ultimate means by which you can effect your purpose. But this is exactly the reverse of what the reserve force instituted by the noble lord opposite is. *It is not the last resource, but it is the first resource under our system.* At this moment you really cannot put a *corps d'armée* into the field in a manner which would satisfy the country, unless Her Majesty was advised that the circumstances justified such a message to the House from the crown as I brought up the other day. Well, my lords, if it was necessary in this state of Europe that Her Majesty should have a sufficient naval and military force, we could take no step but that which we advised the crown to adopt. And what was the consequence of this step? Her Majesty will be able in a very brief space of time to possess an army of 70,000 men fairly and even completely disciplined. It is double the force of Englishmen that Marlborough or Wellington ever commanded; but it is not a force sufficient to carry on a great war. If England is involved in a great war, our military resources are much more considerable than those you may put in motion by this statute; but it is the only way in which you can place at the disposal of the crown a considerable and adequate force when the circumstances of the country indicate an emergency.

"The noble lord the leader of the Opposition [Lord Granville] the other night, in his lively and satisfactory answer to one of his own supporters, admitted and approved the satisfactory state in which the country was in regard to defence. He said:—'We happen to know from the secretary of state that he has a *corps d'armée* ready, and that in a short time he can have another.' These make up the 70,000 men of whom I speak, and therefore the noble lord admitted it was not an unreasonable amount of force we were calling upon parliament to grant. The question, therefore, between us and the noble lord is this (I will not say between the noble lord and us, but between us and many who differ from the policy of the government in this respect), are the circumstances that exist in the East of Europe at this moment—do the circumstances that prevail in the Mediterranean—constitute an emergency which justifies the demands that Her Majesty shall not only have a powerful navy in these waters, but shall command, if necessary, not a very considerable, but an adequate and an efficient army? Now, my lords, I would say that this is a question which comes home to every man's bosom. I connot conceive myself that in the position in which this country now finds itself, when an immense revolution in an important portion of the world has occurred —a revolution which involves the consideration of some of the most important interests of this country and, I may say, even the freedom of Europe — I say I cannot conceive that any person who feels a sense of responsibility in the conduct of affairs could for a moment pretend that, *when all are armed, England alone should be disarmed.*

"I am sure my noble friend [Lord Derby], whose loss I so much deplore, would never uphold that doctrine, or he would not have added the sanction of his authority to the meeting of parliament and the appeal we made to parliament immediately for funds adequate to the occasion of peril which we believed to exist. No, I do not think such things of him, and to the individual of whom I did I should say, *Naviget Anticyram;* * only I trust, for Heaven's sake, that his lunacy would not imperil the British empire. I have ever considered that *Her Majesty's government, of whatever party formed, are the trustees of that empire.* That empire was formed by the enterprise and energy of our ancestors, my lords; and it is

* Anticyra was a city of Greece on the Bay of Anticyra, noted for its hellebore. As this herb was considered an excellent medicine for those suffering from mental derangement, Anticyra was much frequented by the insane anxious to be cured. Hence the expression *Naviget Anticyram*, to be met with in Juvenal, Persius, and Suetonius.

one of a very peculiar character. I know no example of it, either in ancient or modern history. No Cæsar or Charlemagne ever presided over a dominion so peculiar. Its flag floats on many waters; it has provinces in every zone; they are inhabited by persons of different races, different religion, different laws, manners, customs. Some of these are bound to us by the ties of liberty, fully conscious that without their connection with the metropolis they have no security for public freedom and self-government; others are bound to us by flesh and blood, and by material as well as moral considerations. There are millions who are bound to us by our military sway, and they bow to that sway because they know that they are indebted to it for order and justice. All these communities agree in recognizing the commanding spirit of these islands that has formed and fashioned in such a manner so great a portion of the globe. My lords, that empire is no mean heritage; but it is not a heritage that can only be enjoyed; it must be maintained, and it can only be maintained by the same qualities that created it—by courage, by discipline, by patience, by determination, and by a reverence for public law and respect for national rights. My lords, in the East of Europe at this moment some securities of that empire are imperilled. I never can believe that at such a moment it is the Peers of England who will be wanting to uphold the cause of this country. I will not believe for a moment but that you will unanimously vote the address in answer to the message which I now move:—

'That an humble address be presented to Her Majesty, thanking Her Majesty for her most gracious message, communicating to this House Her Majesty's intention to cause the Reserve Force and the Militia Reserve Force, or such part thereof as Her Majesty should think necessary, to be forthwith called out for permanent service.'"

This step was cordially approved of by the country; in the House of Lords no division took place, and in the Lower House a large majority accorded its sanction to the vigorous and patriotic policy of the government. Lord Beaconsfield had declared that England would remain neutral, provided the integrity and independence of the Ottoman empire were strictly respected by Russia. The treaty of San Stefano openly violated those conditions; and the moment had now arrived for the prime minister to prove his fidelity to British interests, and his resolve to uphold the guarantees we had entered into. Nor did he permit Russia to remain long in doubt as to the course intended to be pursued. No sooner had the reserves been called out than orders were issued for the despatch of 7000 Indian soldiers to Malta. This act was much criticised at the time, and condemned by the Opposition as unexampled and unconstitutional. Lord Beaconsfield, however, disputed that verdict, and explained that the step was neither illegal nor without precedent. Native Indian troops, he said, had been despatched from India for service in the Cape; for four years, during a period of disturbance, the Straits settlements had been garrisoned by the Madras native infantry; and again Indian troops had been employed in Hong-Kong, and during the war in Abyssinia. So much for the absence of precedent. Nor was there, he asserted, any Act of Parliament forbidding the use of native Indian troops for European warfare; the provisions of the Mutiny Act but referred to the *white* army serving in India, and not to the native soldiers; and since the native Indian army were forces of the crown, the sovereign had an absolute right—a right not limited—to move such troops whither she pleased. So much, he said, for the unconstitutional character of the proceeding.

These vigorous measures caused Russia to hesitate. She saw that England was not only ready to maintain her demands by proceeding to hostilities, but that she was fully prepared, by appealing to her

immense Indian reserve, to develop into a military power of the first order. Once more the pacific tactics of diplomacy were employed, and this time with complete success. Before the firm and united attitude of England, the arrogance of Russia became less and less domineering and uncompromising; and finally the Czar thought it prudent to give in his consent to attend a congress, and there to lay before the powers of Europe all the articles in the treaty of San Stefano. Thus it was that at the dictation of England the Muscovite had been forced to abandon his faithless and independent course of action. "England," cried Mr. Roebuck, "now holds as proud a position as she ever held, and that is due to the sagacity, and power, and conduct of the despised person once called Benjamin Disraeli, but now Lord Beaconsfield."

The congress was to meet, July 13, 1878, at Berlin, under the presidency of Prince Bismarck; at last it was hoped that a final settlement would be effected of the much-vexed Eastern question. When it became known that the two English plenipotentiaries who were to take part in the deliberations of the congress were to be Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury, there was as much excitement as satisfaction at the selection of the two most prominent members of the cabinet for the grave duty of maintaining British interests. "Our absence," said Lord Beaconsfield laughing, "will increase the importance of our colleagues." Before the departure of the English plenipotentiaries two events took place which much facilitated all diplomatic proceedings, and shaped out the course intended to be followed. The first was a secret agreement entered into between Lord Salisbury and Count Schouvaloff, which official treachery, happily rare in the civil service, had divulged, as to certain matters in dispute between England and Russia.* The second was the conclusion of a convention (June 4, 1878) of a defensive alliance between Great Britain and Turkey, in which, among other matters, the Sultan promised to introduce the necessary reforms and to assign the island of Cyprus to be occupied and administered by England,† whilst England in her turn engaged for all future time to defend the Asiatic dominions of the Ottoman empire "by force of arms."

Into the history of the congress we shall not enter, since the results of its deliberations were so fully laid before the country by Lord Beaconsfield on his return home, and will appear in their proper place. It is no mark of hero-worship to assert that the most talked of member who sat at the horse-shoe table in the Radzivill palace, the foreign office of Berlin, was the prime minister of England. His movements were closely watched; his appearance was eagerly scanned; his remarks which leaked out from the council chamber were printed in every newspaper in the capital, and keenly commented upon; everything he said or did was observed, criticised, and laid to heart. Compared with Lord Beaconsfield, so far as the Berlin population was concerned, the other representatives might never have entered the city. It was the novelist, the debater, the orator, who had conquered every obstacle that stood in the way of his ambition until he had been called upon to sway the destinies of his country, that the caste-loving, Semitic-hating, patient, laborious German people

* Under this agreement the powers decided that Bulgaria was to be divided into two provinces, of which the northern province was to be independent, whilst the southern province was to be governed like an English colony, the governor being appointed for five or ten years with the consent of Europe. Southern Bulgaria was not to reach the Ægean. Turkish troops were not to enter Bulgaria in time of peace, but only on war or insurrection being threatened. Europe was to settle the organization of the Greek and other Christian provinces. The Russian government was not to be paid its indemnity in land. Bayazid was to be restored to the Turks, but Batoum and Kars might become Russian. Subject to these conditions the British government engaged "not to dispute the articles of the preliminary treaty of San Stefano."

† "The English want Cyprus and they will take it as compensation. . . . The English will not do the business of the Turks again for nothing."—*Tancred.*

came to see.* And the presence of Lord Beaconsfield caused the Teuton to arrive at many humiliating reflections. He saw before him an instance of what was impossible in the fatherland—the elevation of a man to the highest post that a subject can attain, without the advantages of birth, the power of wealth, or the opportunities afforded by social influence, but succeeding in the struggle purely and solely by unaided genius, tact, and industry. Such a career was an impossibility in Germany with its social exclusiveness and caste-restrictions; and in more than one Berlin journal the rise of Benjamin Disraeli served as a text on which to deliver a discourse upon the arrogant pettiness and baneful pride of lineage which so degrade and restrict German social and political life.

The conference sat for one month and then dissolved, having completed its labours and restored peace to Europe. Not a little of this result was due to the tone adopted by Lord Beaconsfield. His eloquence, his tenacity of purpose, his gift of seeing instantaneously the consequences of certain propositions, and the uncompromising fashion he maintained those points which he deemed necessary for the preservation of British interests, struck all who heard him, and made a deep impression upon the president of the congress.† The treaty of Berlin was looked upon not so much as a European settlement, as a diplomatic triumph for England. "It tends to prove," wrote an Austrian journal, "that war or no war, the preponderance of English influence in Asia is henceforth secured. Egypt with the Suez Canal and the maritime route to India, Asia Minor with Arabia, as also Syria and the rich Euphrates districts, Turkey on both sides of the Bosphorus, together with the road over Persia to the vassal states of Central Asia, are now all under the powerful dominion of Great Britain. The Empress of India spreads her banners from Asia to Europe, just as the kings of England in days bygone carried the English flag from Europe to Asia. Lord Beaconsfield has, indeed, little to fear either from the judgment of parliament or people."

He had, indeed, little to fear. His return was welcomed by the English people with the utmost enthusiasm. At Dover, at Charing Cross, and at Whitehall, vast crowds assembled to cheer the man who had been consistently loyal to the foreign policy he had advocated, and who had raised the England, scorned and rebuffed under a Liberal administration, to the rightful position her traditions claimed for her among the family of nations. "I assure you," said Lord Beaconsfield to the crowd below his office window at Whitehall, "that no recognition of our labours could be more grateful to my feelings than this expression of the sentiments of those among whom I see many of my oldest and most cherished friends. Lord Salisbury

* During the Berlin congress Lord Beaconsfield never ceased for an instant to be the great attraction. None of the other plenipotentiaries excited so much interest among a whole people. From the moment he crossed the German frontier he was the only subject of any ardent curiosity. At every station at which he stopped a crowd had assembled, and persons who did not know how to pronounce his name, and whom I heard call him "Israel," greeted with cheers that striking physiognomy, which responded so well to the popular imagination. At Berlin, at the doors of the Kaiserhof, it was he who was pointed out, and not only in the streets, but in the diplomatic drawing-rooms he was the centre of attraction. He had then already at times fits of lassitude, and at a reception at Lord Odo Russell's, on a remark that the congress must be very exhausting to him, he sadly replied, "Oh! no; it is time that tires me." At the congress, however, he surprised everybody by the determined stand he made, and Prince Bismarck, not easily astonished, then said of him:—

"Schouvaloff and Beaconsfield are the two leading figures in this congress, and I am delighted with watching them. Beaconsfield has wonderful presence of mind, is versatile and energetic, lets nothing excite him, and has admirably defended his cause. English pride is safe in his hands; and when the negotiations were broken off on the 21st of June he was manfully leading his country to war. It was then that I intervened. Both he and Schouvaloff have done their duty, and have saved their countries from war. My only merit was bringing them together at a moment when they could not themselves make any advances."—*Times Correspondent.*

† Prince Bismarck was a warm admirer of Lord Beaconsfield. A well-known diplomatist here was not long ago conferring with Prince Bismarck in the latter's private cabinet, when the conversation chanced to turn on the Berlin congress and the conspicuous part which the chief plenipotentiary of Great Britain had taken at it. "There," said the chancellor, pointing to the wall, "there hangs the portrait of my sovereign, there on the right that of my wife, and on the left there that of Lord Beaconsfield."—*Times.*

and I have brought you back *peace, I hope, with honour,* and such a peace as will satisfy our sovereign and add to the fame of our country. I can do no more than express my gratitude and pride for the sympathy which you have shown us at this trying moment." It was understood that Lord Beaconsfield did not wish to be advanced to higher honours in the peerage; but almost immediately after his return from the Continent he was invested by the queen, at a private audience at Osborne, with the knighthood of the order of the garter. The nation preferred to think that the prime minister was the sole author of the diplomatic arrangements that had been entered into at Berlin. This flattering but somewhat ungenerous interpretation Lord Beaconsfield invariably contradicted; in all his remarks upon the subject he was most careful to associate the name of Lord Salisbury with his own, and he permitted no distinction to be made which implied any inequality in their labours. Lord Salisbury was also rewarded with the garter.

The next great excitement was to hear the premier's statement as to the results of the congress.* On the night appointed (July 18, 1878) the House of Lords was crowded with a most brilliant audience. "My lords," said Lord Beaconsfield, "in laying on the table of your Lordships' House, as I am about to do, the protocols of the congress of Berlin, I have thought I should be only doing my duty to your Lordships' House, to parliament generally, and to the country, if I made some remarks on the policy which was supported by the representatives of Her Majesty at the congress, and which is embodied in the treaty of Berlin and in the convention which was placed on your Lordships' table during my absence." He then explained that the treaty of San Stefano had been looked upon with much distrust and alarm by Her Majesty's ministers, since they believed it was calculated to bring about a state of affairs dangerous to European independence and injurious to the interests of the British empire. He contended that the government could show that, by the changes and modifications which had been made in the treaty of San Stefano, by the congress of Berlin, and the convention of Constantinople, the menace to European independence had been removed, and the threatened injury to the British empire had been averted.

"Your lordships will recollect," proceeded Lord Beaconsfield, "that by the treaty of San Stefano about one half of Turkey in Europe was formed into a state called Bulgaria—a state consisting of upwards of 50,000 geographical square miles, and containing a population of 4,000,000, with harbours on either sea—both on the shores of the Euxine and of the Archipelago. That disposition of territory severed Constantinople and the limited district which was still spared to the possessors of that city—severed it from the provinces of Macedonia and Thrace by Bulgaria descending to the very shores of the Ægean; and, altogether, a state was formed which, both from its natural resources and its peculiarly favourable geographical position, must necessarily have exercised a predominant influence over the political and commercial interests of that part of the world. The remaining portion of Turkey in Europe was reduced also to a considerable degree by affording what was called compensation to previous rebellious tributary principalities, which have now become independent states—so

* The Berlin treaty consists of sixty-four articles. Briefly condensed its provisions are as follows:—Bulgaria to be an autonomous and tributary principality under the suzerainty of the Sultan, with a Christian government and a national militia. A province to be formed south of the Balkans, called "Eastern Roumelia;" and subject to the Sultan, under conditions of administrative autonomy. Bosnia and Herzegovina to be occupied and administered by Austria-Hungary. Montenegro to be independent, and to possess Antivari and its seaboard. The independence of Servia and Roumania to be recognized under certain conditions. The Bessarabian territory detached from Russia by the treaty of Paris, 1856, to be restored to Russia. The territories of Ardahan, Kars, and Batoum with its port, in Asia, to be ceded to Russia. Turkey and Greece to agree between themselves as to the rectification of their frontier; if unable to agree, the Great Powers reserve to themselves the right of interfering so as to facilitate negotiations. The treaty was signed July 13, and ratified August 3, 1878.

that the general result of the treaty of San Stefano was, that while it spared the authority of the Sultan so far as his capital and its immediate vicinity, *it reduced him to a state of subjection to the great power which had defeated his armies, and which was present at the gates of his capital.* Accordingly, though it might be said that he still seemed to be invested with one of the highest functions of public duty—the protection and custody of the Straits—it was apparent that his authority in that respect could be exercised by him in deference only to the superior power which had vanquished him, and to whom the proposed arrangements would have kept him in subjection.

"My lords, in these matters the congress of Berlin have made great changes. They have restored to the Sultan two-thirds of the territory which was to have formed the great Bulgarian state. They have restored to him upwards of 30,000 geographical square miles, and 2,500,000 of population—that territory being the richest in the Balkans, where most of the land is rich, and the population one of the wealthiest, most ingenious, and most loyal of his subjects. The frontiers of his state have been pushed forward from the mere environs of Salonica and Adrianople to the lines of the Balkans and Trajan's pass; the new principality, which was to exercise such an influence, and produce a revolution in the disposition of the territory and policy of that part of the globe, is now merely a state in the valley of the Danube, and both in its extent and its population is reduced to one-third of what was contemplated by the treaty of San Stefano. My lords, it has been said that while the congress of Berlin decided upon a policy so bold as that of declaring the range of the Balkans as the frontier of what may now be called New Turkey, they have, in fact, furnished it with a frontier which, instead of being impregnable, is in some parts undefended, and is altogether one of an inadequate character.

"My lords, it is very difficult to decide, so far as nature is concerned, whether any combination of circumstances can ever be brought about which would furnish what is called an impregnable frontier. Whether it be river, desert, or mountainous range, it will be found, in the long run, that the impregnability of a frontier must be supplied by the vital spirit of man; and that it is by the courage, discipline, patriotism, and devotion of a population that impregnable frontiers can alone be formed. And, my lords, when I remember what race of men it was that created and defended Plevna, I must confess my confidence that, if the cause be a good one, they will not easily find that the frontier of the Balkans is indefensible. But it is said that although the congress has furnished—and it pretended to furnish nothing more—a competent military frontier to Turkey, the disposition was so ill-managed, that at the same time it failed to secure an effective barrier; that in devising the frontier, it so arranged matters that this very line of the Balkans may be turned. The congress has been charged with having committed one of the greatest blunders that could possibly have been accomplished by leaving Sofia in the possession of a power really independent of Turkey, and one which in the course of time might become hostile to Turkey. My lords, this is, in my opinion, an error on the part of those who furnish information of an authentic character to the different populations of Europe, who naturally desire to have correct information on such matters.*

"It is said that the position of Sofia is of a commanding character, and that of its value the congress were not aware, and that it was yielded to an imperious demand on the part of one of the powers represented at the congress. My lords, I can assure your lordships that there is not a shadow

* The formation of an independent Bulgaria from the Danube to the Balkans, with an elected prince and army of its own, was the outcome of the Bulgarian question. This State was to be the owner of all the fortresses, including Sofia and Varna.

of truth in the statement. I shall show that when the congress resolved to establish the line of the Balkans as the frontier of Turkey, they felt that there would have been no difficulty, as a matter of course, in Turkey retaining possession of Sofia. What happened was this. The highest military authority of the Turks—so I think I may describe him—was one of the plenipotentiaries at the congress of the Porte: I allude to Mehemet Ali Pasha. Well, the moment the line of the Balkans was spoken of, he brought under the notice of his colleagues at the conference—and especially, I may say, of the plenipotentiaries of England—his views on the subject; and speaking as he did, not only with military authority, but also with consummate acquaintance with all those localities, he said nothing could be more erroneous than the idea that Sofia was a strong strategic position, and that those who possessed it would immediately turn the Balkans and march on Constantinople. *He said that as a strategical position it was worthless*, but that there was a position in the Sandjak of Sofia which, if properly defended, might be regarded as impregnable, and that was the pass of Ichtiman. He thought it of vital importance to the Sultan that that position should be secured to Turkey, as then His Majesty would have an efficient defence to his capital.

"*That position was secured.* It is a pass which, if properly defended, will prevent any host, however powerful, from taking Constantinople by turning the Balkans. But in consequence of that arrangement, it became the duty of the plenipotentiaries to see what would be the best arrangement in regard of Sofia and its immediate districts. The population of Sofia and its districts are, I believe, without exception, Bulgarian; and it was thought wise, they being Bulgarians, that if possible it should be included in Bulgaria. That was accomplished by exchanging it for a district in which the population, if not exclusively, are numerically Mohammedan, and which, so far as the fertility of the land is concerned, is an exchange highly to the advantage of the Porte. That, my lords, is a short account of an arrangement which I know has for a month past given rise in Europe, and especially in this country, to a belief that it was in deference to Russia that Sofia was not retained; and that by its not having been retained, Turkey had lost the means of defending herself in the event of her being again plunged into war.

"My lords, it has also been said, with regard to the line of the Balkans, that it was not merely in respect of the possession of Sofia that an error was committed, but that the congress made a great mistake in not retaining Varna. My lords, I know that there are in this assembly many members who have recollections—glorious recollections—of that locality. They will know at once that if the line of the Balkans were established as the frontier, it would be impossible to include Varna, which is to the north of the Balkans. Varna itself is not a place of importance, and only became so in connection with a system of fortifications, which are now to be razed. No doubt, in connection with a line of strongholds, Varna formed a part of a system of defence; but of itself Varna is not a place of importance. Of itself it is only a roadstead; and those who dwell upon the importance of Varna, and consider that it was a great error on the part of the congress not to have secured it for Turkey, quite forget that between the Bosphorus and Varna, upon the coast of the Black Sea, the congress has allotted to Turkey a much more important point on the Black Sea—the harbour of Burgos. My lords, I think I have shown that the charges made against the congress on these three grounds—the frontiers of the Balkans, the non-retention of Sofia, and the giving up of Varna—have no foundation whatever.

"Well, my lords, having established the Balkans as the frontier of Turkey in Europe, the congress resolved that south of the Balkans, to a certain extent, the country should be formed into a province, to which

should be given the name of Eastern Roumelia. At one time it was proposed by some to call it South Bulgaria; but it was manifest that with such a name between it and North Bulgaria there would be constant intriguing to bring about a union between the two provinces. We therefore thought that the province of East Roumelia should be formed, and that there should be established in it a government somewhat different from that of contiguous provinces where the authority of the Sultan might be more unlimited. I am not myself of opinion that, as a general rule, it is wise to interfere with a military power which you acknowledge; but though it might have been erroneous as a political principle to limit the military authority of the Sultan, yet there are in this world other things besides political principles; there are such things as historical facts; and he would not be a prudent statesman who did not take into consideration historical facts as well as political principles. The province which we have formed into Eastern Roumelia had been the scene of many excesses, by parties on both sides, to which human nature looks with deep regret; and it was thought advisable, in making these arrangements for the peace of Europe, that we should take steps to prevent the probable recurrence of such events. Yet to do this and not give the Sultan a direct military authority in the province would have been, in our opinion, a grievous error. We have therefore decided that the Sultan should have the power to defend the barrier of the Balkans with all his available force. He has power to defend his frontiers by land and by sea, both by the passes of the mountains and the ports and strongholds of the Black Sea. No limit has been placed on the amount of force he may bring to bear with that object. No one can dictate to him what the amount of that force will be; but in respect to the interior and internal government of the province, we thought the time had arrived when we should endeavour to carry into effect some of those important proposals intended for the better administration of the states of the Sultan, which were discussed and projected at the conference of Constantinople.

"My lords, I will not enter into any minute details on these questions; they might weary you at this moment, and I have several other matters on which I must yet touch; but generally speaking, I imagine there are three great points which we shall have before us in any attempt to improve the administration of Turkish dominion. First of all, it is most important, and we have so established it in Eastern Roumelia, that the office of governor shall be for a specific period; and that, as in India, it should not be for less than five years. If that system generally obtained in the dominions of the Sultan, I believe it would be of incalculable benefit. Secondly, we thought it desirable that there should be instituted public assemblies, in which the popular element should be adequately represented, and that the business of those assemblies should be to levy and administer the local finances of the province. And thirdly, we thought it equally important that order should be maintained in this province, either by a *gendarmerie* of adequate force, or by a local militia; in both cases the officers holding their commission from the Sultan. But the whole subject of the administration of Eastern Roumelia has been referred to an Imperial Commission at Constantinople; and this commission, after making its investigations, will submit recommendations to the Sultan, who will issue firmans to carry these recommendations into effect. I may mention here, as it may save time, that in all the arrangements which have been made to improve the condition of the subject-races of Turkey in Europe, inquiry by local commissions where investigation may be necessary is contemplated. These commissions are to report their results to the chief commission; and after the firman of the Sultan has been issued, the changes will take place. It is supposed that, in the course of three months

from the time of the ratification of the treaty of Berlin, the principal arrangements may be effected.

"My lords, I may now state what has been effected by the congress in respect of Bosnia—that being a point on which, I think, considerable error prevails. One of the most difficult matters we had to encounter in attempting what was the object of the congress of Berlin—namely, to re-establish the Sultan as a real and substantial authority—was the condition of some of his distant provinces, and especially of Bosnia. The state of Bosnia, and of those provinces and principalities contiguous to it, was one of chronic anarchy. There is no language which can describe adequately the condition of that large portion of the Balkan peninsula occupied by Roumania, Servia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, and other provinces. Political intrigues, constant rivalries, a total absence of all public spirit and of the pursuit of objects which patriotic minds would wish to accomplish, the hatred of races, the animosities of rival religions, and, above all, the absence of any controlling power that could keep these large districts in anything like order—such were the sad truths, which no one who has investigated the subject could resist for a moment. Hitherto, at least until within the last two years, Turkey had some semblance of authority which, though it was rarely adequate, and when adequate, was unwisely exercised, still was an authority to which the injured could appeal, and which sometimes might control violence. But the Turkey of the present time was in no condition to exercise that authority. I inquired into the matter of those most competent to give an opinion, and the result of my investigation was a conviction that nothing short of an army of 50,000 men of the best troops of Turkey would produce anything like order in those parts, and that, were the attempt to be made, it would be contested and resisted, and might finally be defeated.

"But what was to be said at a time when all the statesmen of Europe were attempting to concentrate and condense the resources of the Porte with the view of strengthening them—what would have been the position of the Porte if it had to commence its new career—a career, it is to be hoped, of amelioration and tranquillity—by despatching a large army to Bosnia to deal with those elements of difficulty and danger? It is quite clear, my lords, that such an effort at this moment by Turkey might bring about its absolute ruin. Then what was to be done? There have been before, in the history of diplomacy, not unfrequent instances in which, even in civilized parts of the globe, states, having fallen into decrepitude, have afforded no assistance to keep order and tranquillity, and have become, as these districts have become, a source of danger to their neighbours. Under such circumstances, the powers of Europe have generally looked to see whether there was any neighbouring power of a character entirely different from those disturbed and desolated regions, but deeply interested in their welfare and prosperity, who would undertake the task of attempting to restore their tranquillity and prosperity.

"In the present case you will see that the position of Austria is one that clearly indicates her as fitted to undertake such an office. It is not the first time that Austria has occupied provinces at the request of Europe, to insure that order and tranquillity, which are European interests, might prevail in them. Not once, twice, or thrice has Austria undertaken such an office. There may be differences of opinion as to the policy on which Austria has acted, or as to the principles of government which she has maintained; but that has nothing to do with the fact that, under circumstances similar to those I have described as existing in Bosnia and the provinces contiguous to it, Austria has been invited and has interfered in the manner I have described, and has brought about order and tranquillity. Austria in the present case was deeply interested that

some arrangement should be made. Austria, for now nearly three years, has had upwards of 15,000 refugees from Bosnia, which have been supported by her resources, and whose demands notoriously have been of a vexatious and exhausting character. It was therefore thought expedient by the congress that Austria should be invited to occupy Bosnia, and not to leave it until she had deeply laid the foundations of tranquillity and order. My lords, I am the last man who would wish, when objections are made to our proceedings, to veil them under the decision of the congress; it was a decision which the plenipotentiaries of England highly approved. It was a proposal which, as your lordships will see when you refer to the protocols which I shall lay on the table, was made by my noble friend the secretary of state, that Austria should accept this trust and fulfil this duty; and I earnestly supported him on that occasion.

"My lords, in consequence of that arrangement cries have been raised against our 'partition of Turkey.' My lords, our object has been directly the reverse—our object has *been to prevent partition.* The question of partition is one upon which, it appears to me, very erroneous ideas are in circulation. Some two years ago—before, I think, the war had commenced, but when the disquietude and dangers of the situation were very generally felt—there was a school of statesmen who were highly in favour of what they believed to be the only remedy, what they called the partition of Turkey. Those who did not agree with them were those who thought we should, on the whole, attempt the restoration of Turkey. Her Majesty's government at all times have resisted the partition of Turkey. They have done so because, exclusive of the high moral considerations that are mixed up with the subject, they believed an attempt on a great scale to accomplish the partition of Turkey would inevitably lead to a long, a sanguinary, and often-recurring struggle, and that Europe and Asia would both be involved in a series of troubles and sources of disaster and danger of which no adequate idea could be formed.

"These professors of partition—quite secure no doubt in their own views—have freely spoken to us on this subject. We have been taken up to a high mountain and shown all the kingdoms of the earth, and they have said, 'All these shall be yours if you will worship Partition.' But we have declined to do so for the reasons I have shortly given. And it is a remarkable circumstance that after the great war, and after the prolonged diplomatic negotiations which lasted during nearly a period of three years on this matter, the whole Powers of Europe, including Russia, have strictly, and as completely as ever, come to the unanimous conclusion that the best chance for the tranquillity and order of the world is *to retain the Sultan as part of the acknowledged political system of Europe.* My lords, unquestionably after a great war—and I call the late war a great war, because the greatness of a war now must not be calculated by its duration, but by the amount of the forces brought into the field, and where 1,000,000 of men have struggled for supremacy, as has been the case recently, I call that a great war—but, I say, after a great war like this, it is utterly impossible that you can have a settlement of any permanent character without a redistribution of territory and considerable changes. But that is not partition. My lords, a country may have lost provinces, but that is not partition. We know that not very long ago a great country—one of the foremost countries of the world—lost provinces; yet is not France one of the great powers of the world, and with a future—a commanding future?

"Austria herself has lost provinces—more provinces even than Turkey perhaps; even England has lost provinces—the most precious possessions—the loss of which every Englishman must deplore to this moment. We lost them from bad govern-

ment. Had the principles which now obtain between the metropolis and her dependencies prevailed then, we should not perhaps have lost those provinces, and the power of this empire would have been proportionally increased. It is perfectly true that the Sultan of Turkey has lost provinces; it is true that his armies have been defeated; it is true that his enemy is even now at his gates; but all that has happened to other powers. *But a sovereign who has not yet forfeited his capital, whose capital has not been occupied by his enemy—and that capital one of the strongest in the world,—who has armies and fleets at his disposal, and who still rules over* 20,000,000 *of inhabitants, cannot be described as a power whose dominions have been partitioned.* My lords, it has been said that no limit has been fixed to the occupation of Bosnia by Austria. Well, I think that was a very wise step. The moment you limit an occupation you deprive it of half its virtue. All those opposed to the principles which occupation was devised to foster and strengthen, feel that they have only to hold their breath and wait a certain time, and the opportunity for their interference would again present itself. Therefore, I cannot agree with the objection which is made to the arrangement, with regard to the occupation of Bosnia by Austria, on the question of its duration.

"My lords, there is a point on which I feel it now my duty to trouble your lordships, and that is the question of Greece. A severe charge has been made against the congress, and particularly against the English plenipotentiaries, for not having sufficiently attended to the interests and claims of Greece.* My lords, I think you will find on reflection that that charge is utterly unfounded. The English government were the first that expressed the desire that Greece should be heard at the congress. But, while they expressed that desire, they communicated confidentially to Greece that it must on no account associate that desire on the part of the government with any engagement for the redistribution of territory. That was repeated, and not merely once repeated. The Greek inhabitants, apart from the kingdom of Greece, are a considerable element in the Turkish empire, and it is of the greatest importance that their interests should be sedulously attended to. One of the many evils of that large Slav state—the Bulgaria of the San Stefano treaty—was, that it would have absorbed, and made utterly to disappear from the earth, a considerable Greek population. At the congress the Greeks were heard, and they were heard by representatives of considerable eloquence and ability; but it was quite clear, the moment they put their case before the congress, that they had totally misapprehended the reason why the congress had met together, and what were its objects and character. The Greek representatives, evidently, had not in any way relinquished what they call their great idea; and your lordships well know that it is one which has no limit which does not reach as far as Constantinople. But they did mention at the congress, as a practical people, and feeling that they had no chance of obtaining at that moment all they desired, that they were willing to accept as an instalment the two large provinces of Epirus and Thessaly, and the island of Crete. It was quite evident to the congress, that the representatives of Greece utterly misunderstood the objects of our labours; that we were not there to partition Turkey, and give them their share of Turkey, but for a very contrary purpose; as far as we could, to re-establish the dominion of the Sultan on a rational basis, to condense and concentrate his authority, and to take the opportunity—of which we have largely availed ourselves—of improving the condition of his subjects.

"I trust, therefore, when I have pointed out to your lordships this cardinal error in the views of Greece, that your lordships will feel that the charge made against the

* It is said that one of the finest speeches Lord Beaconsfield delivered at the congress was on the Greek question.

congress has no substantial foundation. But the interests of Greece were not neglected, and least of all by Her Majesty's government. Before the congress of Berlin, believing that there was an opportunity of which considerable advantage might be made for Greece without deviating into partition, we applied to the Porte to consider the long-vexed question of the boundaries of the two states. The boundaries of Greece have always been inadequate and inconvenient; they are so formed as to offer a premium to brigandage—which is the curse of both countries, and has led to misunderstanding and violent intercourse between the inhabitants of both. Now, when some redistribution, and a considerable redistribution of territories was about to take place—now, we thought, was the opportunity for Greece to urge her claim; and that claim we were ready to support, and to reconcile the Porte to viewing it in a large and liberal manner. And I am bound to say that the manner in which our overtures were received by the Porte was encouraging, and more than encouraging. For a long period Her Majesty's government have urged upon both countries, and especially upon Greece, the advantage of a good understanding between them. We urged that it was only by union between Turks and Greeks that any reaction could be obtained against that overpowering Slav interest, which was then exercising such power in the Peninsula, and which had led to this fatal and disastrous war. More than this, on more than one occasion—I may say, on many occasions—we have been the means of preventing serious misunderstandings between Turkey and Greece, and on every occasion we have received from both states an acknowledgment of our good offices.

"We were, therefore, in a position to assist Greece in this matter. But, of course, to give satisfaction to a state which coveted Constantinople for its capital, and which talked of accepting large provinces and a powerful island as only an instalment of its claims for the moment, was difficult. It was difficult to get the views of that government accepted by Turkey, however inclined it might be to consider a reconstruction of frontiers on a large and liberal scale. My noble friend the secretary of state did use all his influence, and the result was that, in my opinion, Greece has obtained a considerable accession of resources and strength. But we did not find on the part of the representatives of Greece that response or that sympathy which we should have desired. Their minds were in another quarter. But though the congress could not meet such extravagant and inconsistent views as those urged by Greece—views which were not in any way within the scope of the congress or the area of its duty—we have still, as will be found in the treaty, or certainly in the protocol, indicated what we believe to be a rectification of frontier, which would add considerably to the strength and the resources of Greece. Therefore, I think, under all the circumstances, it will be acknowledged that Greece has not been neglected. Greece is a country so interesting, that it enlists the sympathies of all educated men. Greece has a future; and I would say, if I might be permitted, to Greece, what I would say to an individual who has a future—'Learn to be patient.'

"Now, my lords, I have touched upon most of the points connected with Turkey in Europe. My summary is that at this moment—of course, no longer counting Servia or Roumania, once tributary principalities, as part of Turkey; not counting even the New Bulgaria, though it is a tributary principality, as part of Turkey; and that I may not be taunted with taking an element which I am hardly entitled to place in the calculation, omitting even Bosnia—European Turkey still remains a dominion of 60,000 geographical square miles, with a population of 6,000,000, and that population in a very great degree concentrated and condensed in the provinces contiguous to the capital. My lords, it was said, when the line of the Balkans

was carried—and it was not carried until after long and agitating discussions—it was said by that illustrious statesman who presided over our labours, that 'Turkey in Europe once more exists.' My lords, I do not think that, so far as European Turkey is concerned, this country has any right to complain of the decisions of the congress, or, I would hope, of the labours of the plenipotentiaries. You cannot look at the map of Turkey as it had been left by the treaty of San Stefano, and as it has been rearranged by the treaty of Berlin, without seeing that great results have accrued. If these results had been the consequences of a long war—if they had been the results of a struggle like that we underwent in the Crimea—I do not think they would have been even then unsubstantial or unsatisfactory. My lords, I hope that you and the country will not forget that these results have been obtained without shedding the blood of a single Englishman; and if there has been some expenditure, it has been an expenditure which, at least, has shown the resources and determination of this country. Had you entered into that war—for which you were prepared, and well prepared—probably in a month you would have exceeded the whole expenditure you have now incurred.

"My lords, I now ask you for a short time to quit Europe and to visit Asia, and consider the labours of the congress in another quarter of the world. My lords, you well know that the Russian arms met with great success in Asia, and that in the treaty of San Stefano considerable territories were yielded by Turkey to Russia. In point of population they may not appear to be of that importance that they are generally considered, because it is a fact which should be borne in mind that the population which was yielded to Russia by Turkey amounted only to about 250,000 souls; and, therefore, if you look to the question of population, and to the increase of strength in a state which depends on population, you would hardly believe that the acquisition of 250,000 new subjects is a sufficient return for the terrible military losses which inevitably must accrue from campaigns in that country. But although the amount of population was not considerable, the strength which the Russians acquired was of a very different character. They obtained Kars by conquest; they obtained Ardahan, another stronghold; they obtained Bayazid, and the valley of Alashkerd with the adjoining territory, which contain the great commercial routes in that part of the world. They also obtained the port of Batoum.

"Now, my lords," continued Lord Beaconsfield, proceeding to give the reasons which had caused him to abandon the points he had on a former occasion considered necessary to maintain—a desertion, loudly decried by his enemies, though perfectly justified under the circumstances—"the congress of Berlin have so far sanctioned the treaty of San Stefano that, with the exception of Bayazid and the valley I have mentioned—no doubt very important exceptions, and which were yielded by Russia to the views of the congress—they have consented to the yielding of the places I have named to Russia. The congress have so far approved the treaty of San Stefano that they have sanctioned the retention by Russia of Kars and Batoum. Now the question arises—the congress having come to that determination—Was it a wise step on the part of the plenipotentiaries of Her Majesty to agree to that decision? That is a question which may legitimately be asked. We might have broken up the congress and said, 'We will not consent to the retention of these places by Russia, and we will use our force to oblige her to yield them up.' Now, my lords, I wish fairly to consider what was our position in this state of affairs. It is often argued as if Russia and England had been at war, and peace was negotiating between the two powers. That was not the case. The rest of Europe were critics

over a treaty which was a real treaty that existed between Russia and Turkey. Turkey had given up Batoum, she had given up Kars and Ardahan, she had given up Bayazid.

"In an examination of the question, then, we must remember that Russia at this moment, so far as Europe is concerned, has acquired in Europe nothing but a very small portion of territory, occupied by 130,000 inhabitants. Well, she naturally expected to find some reward in her conquests in Armenia for the sacrifices which she had made. Well, my lords, consider what those conquests are. There was the strong fort of Kars. We might have gone to war with Russia in order to prevent her acquiring Kars and Batoum, and other places of less importance. The war would not have been, probably, a very short war. It would have been a very expensive war—and, like most wars, it would probably have ended in some compromise, and we should have got only half what we had struggled for. Let us look these two considerable points fairly in the face. Let us, first of all, take the great stronghold of Kars. Three times has Russia captured Kars. Three times, either by our influence or by other influences, it has been restored to Turkey. Were we to go to war for Kars and restore it to Turkey, and then to wait till the next misunderstanding between Russia and Turkey, when Kars should have been taken again? Was that an occasion of a *casus belli?* I do not think your lordships would ever sanction a war carried on for such an object and under such circumstances.

"Then, my lords, look at the case of Batoum, of which your lordships have heard so much. I should have been very glad if Batoum had remained in the possession of the Turks, on the general principle that the less we had reduced its territory in that particular portion of the globe, the better it would be as regards the prestige on which the influence of the Ottoman Porte much depends there. But let us see what is this Batoum, of which you have heard so much. It is generally spoken of in society and in the world as if it were a sort of Portsmouth; whereas, in reality, it should rather be compared with Cowes. It will hold three considerable ships, and if it were packed like the London docks it might hold six; but in that case the danger, if the wind blew from the north, would be immense. You cannot increase the port seaward; for though the water touching the shore is not absolutely fathomless, it is extremely deep, and you cannot make any artificial harbour or breakwater. Unquestionably, in the interior the port might be increased; but it can only be increased by first-rate engineers and the expenditure of millions of capital; and if we were to calculate the completion of the port by the precedents which exist in many countries, and certainly in the Black Sea, it would not be completed under half a century. Now, is that a question for which England would be justified in going to war with Russia? My lords, we have, therefore, thought it advisable *not to grudge Russia those conquests which have been made, especially after obtaining the restoration of the town of Bayazid and its important district.*

"But it seemed to us the time had come when we ought to consider whether certain efforts should not be made to put an end to these perpetually recurring wars between the Porte and Russia, ending, it may be, sometimes apparently in comparatively insignificant results; but always terminating with one fatal consequence—namely, shaking to the centre the influence and the prestige of the Porte in Asia, and diminishing its means of profitably and advantageously governing that country. My lords, it seemed to us that as we had now taken, and as Europe generally had taken, so avowedly deep an interest in the welfare of the subjects of the Porte in Europe, the time had come when we ought to consider whether we could not do something which would improve the general condition of the dominions of the Sultan in Asia; and

instead of these most favoured portions of the globe every year being in a more forlorn and disadvantageous position, whether it would not be possible to take some steps which would secure at least tranquillity and order; and when tranquillity and order were secured, whether some opportunity might not be given to Europe to develop the resources of a country which Nature has made so rich and teeming.

"My lords, we occupy with respect to this part of the world a peculiar position, which is shared by no other power. Our Indian empire is on every occasion on which these discussions occur, or these troubles occur, or these settlements occur—our Indian empire is, to England a source of grave anxiety; and the time appeared to have arrived when, if possible, we should terminate that anxiety. In all the questions connected with European Turkey we had the assistance and sympathy sometimes of all, and often of many of the European powers; because they were interested in the question who should possess Constantinople, and who should have the command over the Danube and the freedom of the Mediterranean. But when we came to considerations connected with our Oriental empire itself, they naturally are not so generally interested as they are in those which relate to the European portion of the dominions of the Porte; and we have to look to our own resources alone. There has been no want, on our part, of invitations to neutral powers to join with us in preventing or in arresting war. Besides the great treaty of Paris, there was the tripartite treaty between England, France, and Austria, which guaranteed the integrity of Turkey, and which, if acted upon, would have prevented war. But that treaty could not be acted upon, from the unwillingness of the parties to it to act; and therefore we must clearly perceive that if anything could be effectually arranged, as far as the Oriental empire is concerned, the arrangements must be made by ourselves. Now, this was the origin of the convention at Constantinople which is on your Lordships' table, and in that convention our object was not merely a military or chiefly a military object. Our object was to place this country certainly in a position in which its advice and in which its conduct might, at least, have the advantage of being connected with a military power and with that force which it is necessary to possess often in great transactions, though you may not fortunately feel that it is necessary to have recourse to that force.

"Our object in entering into that arrangement with Turkey was, as I said before, to produce tranquillity and order. When tranquillity and order were produced, we believed that the time would come when the energy and enterprise of Europe might be invited to what really is another continent, as far as the experience of man is concerned, and that its development will add greatly not merely to the wealth and the prosperity of the inhabitants, but to the wealth and prosperity of Europe. My lords, I am surprised to hear (for though I have not heard it myself from any authority, it is so generally in men's mouths that I am bound to notice it) that the step we have taken should be represented as one that is calculated to excite the suspicion or enmity of any of our allies, or of any state. My lords, I am convinced that when a little time has elapsed, and when people are better acquainted with this subject than they are at present, no one will accuse England of having acted in this matter but with frankness and consideration for other powers. And if there be a power in existence to which we have endeavoured to show most consideration from particular circumstances in this matter it is France. There is no step of this kind that I would take without considering the effect it might have upon the feelings of France—a nation to whom we are bound by almost every tie that can unite a people, and with whom our intimacy is daily increasing. If there could be any step which of all others was least calculated to excite the suspicion of France,

it would appear to be this—because we avoided Egypt, knowing how susceptible France is with regard to Egypt; we avoided Syria, knowing how susceptible France is on the subject of Syria; and we avoided availing ourselves of any part of the *terra firma*, because we would not hurt the feelings or excite the suspicions of France. France knows that for the last two or three years we have listened to no appeal which involved anything like an acquisition of territory, because the territory which might have come to us would have been territory which France would see in our hands with suspicion and dislike.

"But I must make this observation to your lordships. *We have a substantial interest in the East; it is a commanding interest, and its behest must be obeyed.* But the interest of France in Egypt, and her interest in Syria, are, as she acknowledges, sentimental and traditionary interests; and, although I respect them, and although I wish to see in the Lebanon and Egypt the influence of France fairly and justly maintained, and although her officers and ours in that part of the world—and especially in Egypt—are acting together with confidence and trust, we must remember that our connection with the East is not merely an affair of sentiment and tradition, but that we have urgent and substantial and enormous interests which we must guard and keep. Therefore, when we find that the progress of Russia is a progress which, whatever may be the intentions of Russia, necessarily in that part of the world produces such a state of disorganization and want of confidence in the Porte, it comes to this—that if we do not interfere in vindication of our own interests, that part of Asia must become the victim of anarchy, and ultimately become part of the possessions of Russia.

"Now, my lords, I have ventured to review the chief points connected with the subject on which I wished to address you—namely, what was the policy pursued by us, both at the congress of Berlin and in the convention of Constantinople? I am told, indeed, that we have incurred an awful responsibility by the convention into which we have entered. My lords, a prudent minister certainly would not recklessly enter into any responsibility; but *a minister who is afraid to enter into any responsibility is, to my mind, not a prudent minister.* We do not, my lords, wish to enter into any unnecessary responsibility; but there is one responsibility from which we certainly shrink—we shrink from the responsibility of handing to our successors a weakened or a diminished empire. Our opinion is, that the course we have taken will arrest the great evils which are destroying Asia Minor and the equally rich countries beyond. We see in the present state of affairs the Porte losing its influence over its subjects; we see a certainty, in our opinion, of increasing anarchy, of the dissolution of all those ties which, though feeble, yet still exist, and which have kept society together in those countries. We see the inevitable result of such a state of things, and we cannot blame Russia for availing herself of it. But, yielding to Russia what she has obtained, we say to her—'Thus far, and no farther.' Asia is large enough for both of us. There is no reason for these constant wars, or fears of wars, between Russia and England. Before the circumstances which led to the recent disastrous war, when none of those events which we have seen agitating the world had occurred, and when we were speaking in 'another place' of the conduct of Russia in Central Asia, I vindicated that conduct, which I thought was unjustly attacked, and I said then—what I repeat now—there is room enough for Russia and England in Asia.

"But the room that we require we must secure. We have, therefore, entered into an alliance—a defensive alliance—with Turkey, to guard her against any further attack from Russia. We believe that the result of this convention will be order and tranquillity. And then it will be for Europe—for we ask no exclusive privileges or

commercial advantages—it will then be for Europe to assist England in availing ourselves of the wealth which has been so long neglected and undeveloped in regions once so fertile and so favoured. We are told, as I have said before, that we are undertaking great responsibilities. From those responsibilities we do not shrink. We think that, with prudence and discretion, we shall bring about a state of affairs as advantageous for Europe as for ourselves; and in that conviction we cannot bring ourselves to believe that the act which we have recommended is one that leads to trouble and to warfare. No, my lords, I am sure there will be no jealousy between England and France upon this subject. In taking Cyprus *the movement is not Mediterranean, it is Indian.* We have taken a step there which we think necessary for the maintenance of our empire and for its preservation in peace.

"If that be our first consideration, our next is the development of the country. And upon that subject I am told that it was expected to-night, that I should in detail lay before the House the minute system by which all those results which years may bring about are instantly to be acquired. I, my lords, am prepared to do nothing of the kind. We must act with caution. We are acting with a power, let me remind the House, which is an independent power—the Sultan; and we can decide nothing but with his consent and sanction. We have been in communication with that prince, who, I may be allowed to remind the House, has other things to think about even than Asia Minor; for no man was ever tried, from his accession to the throne till this moment, so severely as the Sultan has been. But he has invariably during his reign expressed his desire to act with England and to act with Europe, and especially in the better administration and management of his affairs. The time will come—and I hope it is not distant—when my noble friend the secretary of state for foreign affairs may be able to communicate to the House details of these matters, which will be most interesting. But we must protest against being forced into statements on matters of importance, which are necessarily still immature. And we must remember that, formally speaking, even the treaty of Berlin has not been ratified, and there are many things which cannot even be commenced until the ratification of that treaty has occurred.

"My lords, I have now laid before you the general outline of the policy we have pursued, both in the congress of Berlin and at Constantinople. They are intimately connected with each other, and they must be considered together. I only hope that the House will not misunderstand—and I think the country will not misunderstand—our motives in occupying Cyprus, and in encouraging those intimate relations between ourselves and the government and the population of Turkey. They are not movements of war; they are operations of peace and civilization. We have no reason to fear war. Her Majesty has fleets and armies which are second to none. England must have seen with pride the Mediterranean covered with her ships; she must have seen with pride the discipline and devotion which have been shown to her and her government by all her troops, drawn from every part of her empire. I leave it to the illustrious duke, in whose presence I speak, to bear witness to the spirit of imperial patriotism which has been exhibited by the troops from India, which he recently reviewed at Malta. But it is not on our fleets and armies, however necessary they may be for the maintenance of our imperial strength, that I alone or mainly depend in that enterprise on which this country is about to enter. It is on what I most highly value—the consciousness that in the Eastern nations there is confidence in this country, and that, while they know we can enforce our policy, at the same time they know that our empire is an empire of liberty, of truth, and of justice."

It was impossible that the settlement of

a question which had so long agitated the cabinets of Europe, should have been permitted to pass without some adverse criticism. To the nation at large the conclusions arrived at—thanks to the policy of spirited intervention adopted by Lord Beaconsfield, and as explained in his speech—by the Berlin congress were most acceptable. It was felt that by the counsels of our plenipotentiaries war had been prevented, and yet the prestige of England had not been permitted to suffer; the interests of our empire had been secured, and the integrity and independence of Turkey preserved, so far as they could be preserved. The views which the government had set before them had been attained amid a chorus of approval, both at home and abroad, such as is seldom bestowed upon the successful labours of statesmen. It is the duty of an Opposition, however, to carp and cavil, and it therefore pleased a splenetic section of the Liberal party, inspired by their jealous and disappointed leader, to find fault with various of the provisions of the Berlin treaty. Mr. Gladstone, addressing a body of his supporters in the hall of a metropolitan borough, complained that the engagements of the country had been extended and its taxation increased, not only without the assent, but without the knowledge of the nation. He condemned the covenant to defend Asia Minor as an "insane covenant," to which not one of the statesmen he had known would have ever been induced to put his name; whilst he branded the secret proceedings that had taken place as acts of duplicity "not surpassed, and I believe rarely equalled, in the history of nations." Lord Hartington, as was to be expected, was more temperate; he contented himself with expressing "regrets" that Greece had been abandoned; that we had entered upon new liabilities in Asia Minor; and that parliament had been kept in the dark throughout the negotiations, and only admitted into the confidence of ministers when the proceedings had terminated. Mr. W. E. Forster denounced the folly of turning England into a great continental power; whilst Mr. Fawcett described the language employed by the prime minister in the House of Lords with regard to Greece, as contemptuously insolent, and asserted that the Greeks, "relying on the promises of a great and magnanimous people, had been grossly and basely deceived." Then it was also made matter of complaint that the island of Cyprus was notoriously unhealthy, and would prove a useless acquisition; whilst objections were raised against Bulgaria having been divided into two separate states, under different forms of government; against Bosnia and Herzegovina having been handed over to Austria; against the Bessarabian territory being annexed to Russia; against the cession of the port of Batoum; and again and again against the conduct of the congress towards Greece.

This cavilling was, however, the exception, and but the shadows cast by a brilliant success. Lord Beaconsfield was now at the zenith of his power. He had all that a subject could aspire after, and whatever of rank or fortune the crown could bestow on him would be useless to add to the fame he already possessed. Next to Prince Bismarck, he was the best known statesman in Europe. Unlike Walpole, who was forgotten as Orford, and Pulteney, who was forgotten as Bath, he had made the name of Beaconsfield as familiar in the mouths of men as had been that of Disraeli, and had burnished it with an additional lustre. Fortune had been so lavish with her favours, that there seemed to be nothing more for her to grant. Honoured by his sovereign; the star of the first order in Europe glittering on his breast; a member of the proudest aristocracy which privilege possesses; exercising an influence which all obeyed; the favourite of society; the hero of the people—if rank, and power, and popularity could satisfy ambition, what more had Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield, to wish for? He had run the race and gained all the prizes.

In honour of his diplomatic triumph, and of the policy he had carried out, a banquet was given to him and his brilliant colleague by the Conservative members of both Houses of Parliament, in the riding school at Knightsbridge, July 27, 1878. The guests numbered 500, and the chair was taken by the Duke of Buccleuch. "We have met here," said the chairman, "to welcome home, after arduous and difficult duties, two noble lords, though on this occasion I shall refer only to one who holds the position of prime minister of this country. It is not for me on this occasion to enter upon the career of that noble lord, for it is well known as a matter of history. His career and his political character have been before us for upwards of forty years. He has had one great advantage—I will not say at the end of his career, for that, I hope, is still far distant; but his career, like that of all statesmen in this country, has been and could not be otherwise than a chequered one—sometimes defeat, oftentimes victory; and now, at last, I hope he has achieved the greatest victory of his life. He went out with an apprehension on the part of many, and with the declaration of others, that he was going to produce war; but he has returned crowned with peace. Notwithstanding the difficult and arduous position in which he has been placed, assailed at home as well as abroad, but at the same time well supported at home, his motives and intentions well understood, we have not at any time lost our confidence in him. Nor have we doubted him, though in all the struggles he has had to undergo in parliament and elsewhere he was obliged, of course, to speak with great reticence of his policy. He has been able, at all events, in the great council of nations to speak openly and clearly with no uncertain sound, producing the happy result which we now celebrate. You have shown your appreciation of his merits by your presence, and many more of his personal friends and supporters would have been glad to be here if there had been space for them. A generous foe is as welcome as the constant friend. No one can appreciate more than I do a noble, open, generous foe. We meet in the field; let us have a fair fight, and he who conquers wins. So it has been with my noble friend. He has had many a hard battle to fight, but on this occasion he has fought with success, carrying with him, I believe, the feeling of the whole country. I propose now 'The health of Lord Beaconsfield,' and welcome home to him: welcome to him as the greatest conqueror, who has vanquished war and brought us back peace."

The toast was received with enthusiastic cheering, the guests rising, and the band playing "Rule Britannia." When silence had been restored, Lord Beaconsfield replied. "I am sure," he said, "that you will acquit me of affectation if I say that it is not without emotion that I have received this expression of your goodwill and sympathy. When I look around this chamber I see the faces of some who entered public life with myself, as my noble friend the noble duke has reminded me, more than forty years ago; I see more whose entrance into public life I witnessed when I had myself gained some experience of it; and, lastly, I see those who have only recently entered upon public life, and whom it has been my duty and my delight to encourage and to counsel when they entered that public career so characteristic of this country, and which is one of the main securities of our liberty and welfare. My lords and gentlemen, our chairman has referred to my career, like that of all public men in this country, as one of change and vicissitude; but I have been sustained, even in the darkest hours of our party, by the conviction that I possessed your confidence, I will say your indulgent confidence, for in the long course of my public life, that I may have committed many mistakes is too obvious a truth to touch upon; but that you have been indulgent there is no doubt, for I can, I hope I may say proudly, remember that it has been my lot to lead in either House of Parliament this great

party for a longer period than has ever fallen to the lot of any public man in the history of this country. That I have owed that result to your generous indulgence more than to any personal qualities of my own, no man is more sensible than myself; but it is a fact that I may recur to with some degree of proud satisfaction.

"Our noble chairman has referred to the particular occasion which has made me your guest to-day. I attended that high assembly which has recently dispersed, with much reluctance. I yielded to the earnest solicitations of my noble friend near me, my colleague in that great enterprise. He thought that my presence might be of use to him in the vast difficulties he had to encounter; but I must say now, as I ever shall say, that to his lot fell the labouring oar in that great work, and that you are, I will not say equally, but more indebted to him than to myself for the satisfactory result which you kindly recognize. I share the conviction of our noble chairman that it is one which has been received with satisfaction by the country; but I am perfectly aware that that satisfaction is not complete or unanimous, because I know well that before eight-and-forty hours have passed the marshalled hosts of opposition will be prepared to challenge what has been done, and to question the policy we hope we have established.*

"My lords and gentlemen, as I can no longer raise my voice in that House of Parliament where this contest is to take place, as I sit now in a House where our opponents never unsheath their swords, a House where although the two chief plenipotentiaries of the queen sit they are met only by innuendo and by question, I hope you will permit me, though with extreme brevity, to touch on one or two of the points which in a few hours may much engage the interest and attention of parliament. My lords and gentlemen, it is difficult to describe the exact meaning of the charge which is brought against the plenipotentiaries of the queen, as it will be introduced to the House of Commons. Drawn as it is, it appears at first sight to be only *a series of congratulatory regrets.* But, my lords and gentlemen, if you penetrate the meaning of this movement it would appear that there are two points in which it is hoped that a successful onset may be made on Her Majesty's government; and on these two points, and these alone, I hope with becoming brevity at this moment, perhaps, you will allow me to make one or two remarks. It is charged against Her Majesty's government that they have particularly deceived and deserted Greece. Now, this is a subject which is, I think, capable of simpler treatment than hitherto it has encountered in public discussion. We have given at all times, in public and in private, to the government of Greece and to all who might influence its decisions but one advice—that on no account should they be induced to interfere in those coming disturbances which, two years ago, threatened Europe and which concluded in a devastating war. And we gave that advice on these grounds, which appear to me incontestable. If, as Greece supposed and, as we thought, erroneously supposed the partition of the Ottoman empire was at hand, Greece, morally, geographically, ethnographically, was sure of receiving a considerable allotment of that partition when it took place. It would be impossible to make a resettle-

* In allusion to the resolution then about to be moved by Lord Hartington in the House of Commons, "That whilst the House has learned with satisfaction that the troubles which have arisen in the east of Europe have been terminated by the treaty of Berlin, without a further recourse to arms, and rejoices in the extension of the liberty and self-government of some of the populations of European Turkey, the House regrets that it has not been found practicable to deal in a satisfactory manner with the claims of the kingdom of Greece and of the Greek subjects of the Porte; that by the assumption, under the Anglo-Turkish convention, of a sole guarantee of the integrity of the remaining territories of Turkey in Asia, the military liabilities of this country have been unnecessarily extended; that the undefined engagements entered into by Her Majesty's government, in respect of the better administration of those provinces, have imposed heavy responsibilities upon the state, whilst no sufficient means have been indicated for securing their fulfilment; and that such engagements have been entered into, and responsibilities incurred, without the previous knowledge of Parliament." The resolution was rejected by the large majority of 143.

ment of the East of Europe without largely satisfying the claims of Greece; and great as those claims might be, if that were the case it was surely unwise in Greece to waste its treasure and its blood. If, on the other hand, as Her Majesty's government believed, the end of this struggle would not be a partition of the Ottoman empire, but that the wisdom and experience of all the powers and governments would come to the conclusion that the existence and strengthening of the Ottoman government was necessary to the peace of Europe, and without it long and sanguinary and intermitting struggles must inevitably take place, it was equally clear to us that when the settlement occurred all those rebellious tributary principalities that have lavished their best blood and embarrassed their finances for generations would necessarily be but scurvily treated, and that Greece, even under this alternative, would find that she was wise in following the advice of England and not mixing in a fray so fatal.

"Well, my lords and gentlemen, has not the event proved the justice and accuracy of that view? At this moment, though Greece has not interfered, fortunately for herself—though she has not lavished the blood of her citizens and wasted her treasure—under the treaty of Berlin she has the opportunity of obtaining a greater increase of territory than will be attained by any of the rebellious principalities that have lavished their blood and wasted their resources in this fierce contest. I should like to see that view answered by those who accuse us of misleading Greece. We gave to her the best advice. Fortunately for Greece, she followed it; and I will hope that, following it with discretion and moderation, she will not lose the opportunity we have secured for her in the advantages she may yet reap. I would make one more remark on this subject, which will soon so occupy the attention of many who are here present. It has been said we have misled and deserted Greece because we were the power which took steps that Greece should be heard before the congress. Why did we do that? Because we had ever expressed our opinion that in the elevation of the Greek race—not merely the subjects of the King of Greece—one of the best chances of the improvement of society under the Ottoman rule would be found, and that it was expedient that the rights of the Greek race should be advocated by that portion of it which enjoyed an independent political existence; and all this time, too, let it be recollected that my noble friend was unceasing in his efforts to obtain such a settlement of the claims, or rather I should say the desires, of Greece with the Porte as would conduce greatly to the advantage of that kingdom. And not without success. The proposition of Lord Salisbury for the rectification of the frontiers of Greece really includes all that moderate and sensible men could desire; and that was the plan that ultimately was adopted by the congress, and which Greece might avail herself of if there be prudence and moderation in her councils.

"Let me here make one remark—which, indeed, is one that applies to other most interesting portions of this great question—it refers to the personal character of the Sultan. From the first the Sultan of Turkey has expressed his desire to deal with Greece in a spirit of friendliness and conciliation. He has been perfectly aware that, in the union of the Turkish and Greek races, the only balance could be obtained and secured against the Pan-Slavic monopoly which was fast invading the whole of his dominions. Therefore there was every disposition on his part to meet the proposals of the English government with favour, and he did meet them with favour. Remember the position of that prince. It is one almost unprecedented. No prince, probably, that ever lived has gone through such a series of catastrophes. One of his predecessors commits suicide; his immediate predecessor is subject to a visitation

more awful even than suicide. The moment he ascends the throne his ministers are assassinated. A conspiracy breaks out in his own palace, and then he learns that his kingdom is invaded, his armies, however valiant, are defeated, and that the enemy is at his gates; yet with all these trials, and during all this period, he has never swerved in the expression, and I believe the feeling, of a desire to deal with Greece in a spirit of friendship. Well, what happened—what was the last expression of feeling on his part? He is apparently a man whose every impulse is good; however great the difficulties he has to encounter, however evil the influences that may sometimes control him, his impulses are good; and where impulses are good there is always hope. He is not a tyrant—he is not dissolute—he is not a bigot or corrupt. What was his last decision? When my noble friend—not encouraged, I must say, by Greece, but still continuing his efforts—endeavoured to bring to some practical result this question of the frontiers, the Sultan said that what he was prepared to do he wished should be looked on as an act of grace on his part, and of his sense of the friendliness of Greece in not attacking him during his troubles; but as a congress was now to meet, he should like to hear the result of the wisdom of congress on the subject.

"The congress has now spoken; and though it declared that it did not feel justified in compelling the Sultan to adopt the steps it might think advantageous even for his own interests, the congress expressed an opinion which I doubt not the Sultan is prepared to consider in the spirit of conciliation he has so often displayed. And this is the moment when a party for factious purposes, and a party unhappily not limited to England, is egging on Greece to violent courses! I may, perhaps, have touched at too much length on this topic; but the attacks made on Her Majesty's government are nothing compared with the public mischief that may occur if misconception exists on this point. There is one other point on which I would make a remark, and that is with regard to the convention of Constantinople of the 4th of June. When I study the catalogue of congratulatory regrets with attention, this appears to be the ground on which a great assault is to be made on the government. It is said that we have increased, and dangerously increased, our responsibilities as a nation by that convention. In the first place, I deny that we have increased our responsibilities by that convention. I maintain that by that convention we have lessened our responsibilities. Suppose, now, for example, the settlement of Europe had not included the convention of Constantinople and the occupation of the isle of Cyprus; suppose it had been limited to the mere treaty of Berlin, what under all probable circumstances might then have occurred? In ten, fifteen, it might be in twenty years, the power and resources of Russia having revived, some quarrel would again have occurred, Bulgarian or otherwise, and in all probability the armies of Russia would have been assailing the Ottoman dominions both in Europe and Asia, and enveloping and inclosing the city of Constantinople and its all-powerful position.

"Well, what would be the probable conduct, under these circumstances, of the government of this country, whoever the ministers might be, whatever party might be in power? I fear there might be hesitation for a time—a want of decision—a want of firmness; but no one doubts that ultimately England would have said, 'This will never do; we must prevent the conquest of Asia Minor; we must interfere in this matter and arrest the course of Russia.' No one, I am sure, in this country, who impartially considers this question, can for a moment doubt what under any circumstances would have been the course of this country. Well, then, that being the case, I say it *is extremely important that this country should take a step beforehand which should indicate what the policy*

of England would be; that you should not have your ministers meeting in a council chamber, hesitating and doubting, and considering contingencies, and then acting at last, but acting perhaps too late. I say, therefore, that the responsibilities of this country have not been increased; the responsibilities already existed, though I, for one, would never shrink from increasing the responsibilities of this country if they are responsibilities which ought to be undertaken. The responsibilities of the country are practically diminished by the course we have taken. My lords and gentlemen, one of the results of my attending the congress of Berlin has been to prove, what I always suspected to be an absolute fact, that *neither the Crimean war nor this horrible devastating war which has just terminated would have taken place if England had spoken with the necessary firmness.* Russia has complaints to make against this country, that neither in the case of the Crimean war nor on this occasion—and I don't shrink from my share of the responsibility in this matter—was the voice of England so clear and decided as to exercise a due share in the guidance of European opinion. Well, gentlemen, suppose my noble friend and myself had come back with the treaty of Berlin, and had not taken the step which is to be questioned within the next eight and forty hours, could we with any self-respect have met our countrymen when they asked, what securities have you made for the peace of Europe—how far have you diminished the chance of perpetually recurring war on this question of the East by the treaty of Berlin? Why, they could say, all we have gained by the treaty of Berlin is probably the peace of a few years, and at the end of that time the same phenomenon will arise, and the ministers of England must patch up the affair as well as they could.

"That was not the idea of public duty entertained by my noble friend and myself. We thought the time had come when we should take steps which would produce some order out of the anarchy and chaos that had so long prevailed. We asked ourselves was it absolutely a necessity that the fairest provinces of the world should be the most devastated and most ill-used, and for this reason that there is no security for life or property so long as that country is in perpetual fear of invasion and aggression? It was under these circumstances that we recommended the course we had taken, and I believe that the consequences of that policy will tend to and even secure peace and order in a portion of the globe which hitherto has seldom been blessed by these celestial visitants. I hold that we have laid the foundation of a state of affairs which may open a new continent to the civilization of Europe, and that the welfare of the world and the wealth of the world may be increased by availing ourselves of that tranquillity and order which the more intimate connection of England with that country will now produce. But I am sorry to say that, though we taxed our brains and our thought to establish a policy which might be beneficial to the country, we have not satisfied those who are our critics. I was astonished to learn that the convention of the 4th of June has been described as an 'insane' convention. It is a strong epithet. I do not myself pretend to be as competent a judge of insanity as my right hon. opponent. I will not say to the right hon. gentleman *Naviget Anticyram,* but I would put this issue to an English jury—Which do you believe most likely to enter into an insane convention, a body of English gentlemen honoured by the favour of their sovereign and the confidence of their fellow-subjects, managing your affairs for five years, I hope with prudence, and not altogether without success, or a sophistical rhetorician, inebriated with the exuberance of his own verbosity, and gifted with an egotistical imagination that can at all times command an interminable and inconsistent series of arguments to malign an opponent and to glorify himself?

"My lords and gentlemen, I leave the decision upon that convention to the parliament and the people of England. I believe that in that policy are deeply laid the seeds of future welfare, not merely to England, but to Europe and to Asia; and confident that the policy we have recommended is one that will be supported by the country, I and those that act with me can endure these attacks. My lords and gentlemen, let me thank you once more for the manner in which you have welcomed me to-day. These are the rewards of public life that never pall—the sympathy of those who have known you long, who have worked with you long, who have the same opinions upon the policy that ought to be pursued in this great and ancient empire. These are sentiments which no language can sufficiently appreciate, which are a consolation under all circumstances, and the highest reward that a public man can attain. The generous feeling that has prompted you to welcome my colleague and myself on our return to England will inspire and strengthen our efforts to serve our country; and it is not merely that in this welcome you encourage those who are doing their best for what they conceive to be the public interests, but you tell to Europe also that England is a grateful country, and knows how to appreciate the efforts of those of her public servants who are resolved to maintain to the utmost the empire of Great Britain."

The remarks which Lord Salisbury made when acknowledging the toast of his health, are also worthy of being preserved. He began by alluding to the acceptance of the post of chief plenipotentiary by Lord Beaconsfield. "Gentlemen," said Lord Salisbury, "my noble friend the prime minister told you what was absolutely accurate; that it was owing to my earnest importunity that he undertook the great office, in filling which he has added to his country's lustre and fame. He naturally was not ambitious for a post which was certain to be fatiguing, and which might be dangerous; but on consideration he felt with me that his presence at Berlin was too essential to the success of our negotiations for him to refuse my request. I felt certain—and it was a hope in which I was not deceived—that his presence there, speaking as he alone was able to do, with the full mandate of the English people, would produce an effect upon the negotiations and the action of other powers such as no other man could have produced."

Then, after touching upon a few details, Lord Salisbury thus concluded:—"When the congress was approaching its termination, and when the prospect of separating was near, it was a favourite subject of conversation what sort of reception the plenipotentiaries would get in the various countries to which they were returning. I am sorry to say that the surmises were generally gloomy; but these sad anticipations were never shared by the English plenipotentiaries, for they knew they had to deal with a people who judged those who served them earnestly with indulgence, and they knew that there were many circumstances which would tend to bias that judgment in their favour. In the first place, probably no ministry has ever passed through a difficult crisis of foreign affairs amid such a storm of abuse as the present government. Every calumny, every misconstruction that malignant ingenuity could invent, was paraded forth in order to lessen our influence and hinder our efforts; and at the precise moment when it was of vital importance that Europe should understand that England was in earnest, every nerve was strained to make England seem infirm of purpose and impotent in action. We in our diplomacy had to struggle against a loud-mouthed diplomacy struggling in another direction out of doors.

"And there was another reason which, apart from any details of these negotiations or the settlement which we have arrived at, has, I think, predisposed the English people in our favour. They have

felt that, however imperfectly, *we were striving to pick up the thread—the broken thread—of England's old imperial position.* For a short time there have been men eminent in public affairs who have tried to persuade you that all the past history of England was a mistake, that the duty and interest of England were *to confine herself solely to her own insular affairs, to cultivate commerce, accumulate riches, and not, as was said, to entangle herself in foreign politics.* Now, it seems a small answer to these men to say that, even for their own low purposes, their policy was mistaken. The commerce of a great commercial country like this will only flourish—history attests it again and again—under the shadow of empire, and those who give up empire to make commerce prosper will end by losing both.

"But such are not the considerations which should guide a country like this. What are the principles that guide us in the estimation of our fellow-men at home, or in the conduct which we ourselves desire to pursue? We occasionally meet within our own localities some one who thinks that he will not entangle himself in his neighbour's affairs, who will not undertake public business lest it should injure his health, who will not take part in politics lest it should strain his fortune, who will not accept the position of a trustee lest it should add to his responsibilities. You all know what you think of these men. They do not increase their own happiness and power, and they generally end by losing the very object for which they struggle. What we desire is, that England should not occupy a position, and fulfil a character among the nations of the earth, such as we should despise among our neighbours at home. I do not know, gentlemen, if you have observed it; but it struck me with a thrill of gratulation when I saw that in taking possession of Cyprus not one voice, not one hand, was lifted up to resist the transfer, and the proclamation of Queen Victoria's name was everywhere received with enthusiasm, while other nations, perhaps militarily more powerful than ourselves, have to struggle with the deep reluctance of the people to undergo the blessings they profess to offer.

"What is the reason of the difference? It is that we, at all events, in the cause of civilization, have won our spurs before the world. We have shown in governing India that where English rule and English influence extend, peace and order revive, prosperity and wealth increase, and therefore it is that the prospect of English rule was welcomed by men of every race and every creed. Have we a right to throw away, to hide under a bushel, to conceal in a corner, such influence as this, merely lest we should at some distant time, and in some inconceivable circumstances, add to our responsibility? I am told that in the task of aiding and counseling the Ottoman empire to bring the blessings of civilization to some of the fairest portions of the earth, we shall be hampered by the jealousy of other powers. I utterly refuse to believe it. When they find what our policy really is, that we are there merely to extend to others the benefits we ourselves enjoy; when they find that we welcome their competition, that we invite every trade, that we grudge success to no nationality, that the one object we have in view is that peace and order should be restored, and that races and creeds which for centuries back have lived in feud should henceforth live in amity and goodwill, then I believe that all idea of jealousy will vanish, and that they will heartily co-operate with us in our civilizing mission. At all events, we will not recoil from such a task because it may seem to add to our responsibilities or increase our labours; and if we are able in ever so small a degree to accomplish these results, we at least shall have no cause to repent of the labours we have undertaken, and you will have no cause to be ashamed of us."

CHAPTER XV.

AFGHANISTAN.

Lord Beaconsfield had always been a popular man in the city, where his wit and eloquence had often enlivened many a dull banquet at the Guildhall and the Mansion House. Business men, though they might shudder at some of the surprises he prepared for them, and might shake their heads ominously at his commercial theories, were always kindly and favourable critics of his career. They admired his great genius, his splendid perseverance, and the manly patriotism with which he upheld the imperial interests of the country; they respected his courage, his noble independence which never made him conceal what smaller and more vulgar minds might have been ashamed of, the tenacity of purpose which characterized him, the humour which was always so ready; and above all, they loved, Englishmen-like, his hard hitting, yet untinged by any vindictiveness, when his opposition was aroused. It was not therefore to be expected that the civic authorities should allow such an opportunity as the return of the two plenipotentiaries, after having achieved a brilliant diplomatic triumph, to pass without formal, yet enthusiastic recognition. In all pomp and splendour, the two heroes of the hour were made welcome to the Guildhall and presented with the freedom of the city. One of those banquets which corporations only know how to give, and aldermen only know how to appreciate, then followed. The health of Her Majesty's ministers was, of course, coupled with the name of Lord Beaconsfield; and when the prime minister rose to reply, cheer after cheer rang through the vast hall, greeting his presence, whilst his words were listened to as if he had never spoken before upon the subject. Yet in spite of his exhaustive speech in the House of Lords, and his after-dinner oration at Knightsbridge, the statesman whom England delighted to honour had still something fresh to say.

"My Lord Mayor," he said (August 3, 1878) "it is nearly three years since I, addressing one of your predecessors, I think in this hall, said that there were some disturbances in a distant province of the Turkish empire which could not be looked upon without a conviction that they might become more serious. At that time the three imperial powers who, from their contiguity to that province, necessarily had a more direct and immediate connection with it than England, had communicated with this country upon the subject; and we had said that, although their connection with the province might be more direct, it was not more considerable than that of England. I also took the opportunity of expressing to your predecessor that Her Majesty's government had well considered those circumstances—that the great interests of England which might be involved should be sedulously guarded, and that we were resolved to uphold and maintain them.

"My Lord Mayor, since that time many things have happened of great moment. For the last two years an impending general war has been apprehended by every country. There has been the absolute occurrence of a great war, limited, no doubt, in its area, but stupendous and sanguinary. There have been fears, and well-founded fears, that the balance of power in the Mediterranean, in which England is so deeply interested, might be subverted. There have been fears that Russia would establish ports in the Ægean, and that the restrictions

on the navigation of the Straits, which have been looked upon as a cardinal point by this country, were about to be abolished. There were apprehensions, and well-founded apprehensions, that Asia Minor was about to be conquered, and that the establishment and influence of Great Britain in the Persian Gulf might be seriously endangered. There has been in the interval a conference at Constantinople, and there has been, as you well know, a congress at Berlin. And what has been the outcome of these great events, these startling contingencies, and these enormous vicissitudes? *The outcome has been a general peace in Europe—a peace which I believe will be enduring.* And why, my Lord Mayor, do I believe that peace will be enduring? Because I see that every one of the powers is benefited by that peace, and no one is humiliated.

"If you take the two belligerents, beginning with Russia, there is no doubt that the decision of the congress of Berlin forced Russia *to relinquish the most important conquest which she had made in Europe;* but, at the same time, there was a due regard to the military honour of that great power, and that was left in her hands which could not be denied to a conquering foe whose very armies were at the gates of the metropolis of their opponent. With regard to Russia also there are other considerations in this peace that must not be omitted. The peace that has been made is a great check to the restlessness of the military authority of Russia. A party by no means essentially powerful, a party by no means the most numerous, a party which does not count in its ranks the most important men in that country, but a party which has taken advantage of military opportunities when they have occurred and under governments which ought not to have permitted them, a party which has made Europe fearful and restless—that party has now learnt, for the first time, that the principles of a settlement are established which will not let them act with impunity and divert the energies of Russia from the development of its resources which that country especially requires, and which if pursued would add greatly to the happiness of its people.

"Well, then, my Lord Mayor, let us see what is the condition of the other belligerent. To form an accurate conception of his position, you must remember that only a few months ago countless legions of his foes were rattling at the very gates of his capital, his fairest provinces had been conquered, and, notwithstanding the valour of his troops—which all recognize and admire—his resources were exhausted. The wisdom of the congress of Berlin has made that conquering foe relinquish the greater portion and the wealthiest portion of his conquests. The Sultan of Turkey, who had scarcely a square mile of territory left in Europe, has now in Europe a rich and abounding country which in area is equal to England and Wales; while in the Asiatic portion of his dominions his anxieties are terminated; and he knows well the opportunity has now come when the resources of his country may be developed with the advantage of that tranquillity which they scarcely ever before enjoyed. So much, my Lord Mayor, for the belligerents; let us look for a moment to the position of the neutral powers.

"The first and in these matters the most important of the neutral powers is Austria, and what has happened to Austria? She, as the trustee of Turkey, has occupied an important province which was no source of wealth, but a source of weakness and devastation to the Porte, but in the possession of Austria permits us to check, I should hope for ever, that *Panslavist confederacy and conspiracy which has already proved so disadvantageous to the happiness of the world.* From the commanding position she will now hold you may look forward to peace, tranquillity, and order, in countries where they have never before flourished, and the condition of which has been a perpetual menace to Europe of turmoil and of warfare. If you look at the position of the two Mediterranean powers,

France and Italy, they have the satisfaction of knowing that the balance of power in the Mediterranean has not been disturbed. They have obtained that peace in which no powers are more interested than themselves; and they know well that England is pursuing a policy in that part of the world which may lead to the increase of the wealth and happiness of society, but which they are sincerely and even eagerly invited by England to participate in and to share.

"Well, I need say nothing about the great peacemaker, Germany. Germany was the first to invite this congress, and Germany, from the first, has said that all she required was the peace of Europe. This object has been attained. There remains, then, only our own country; and I can appeal to what has occurred—I can appeal with confidence to the great settlement which is now known to all of you and in every one's mouth, and ask you whether I *have not redeemed the pledge I gave three years ago, that Her Majesty's ministers would maintain the interests of their country.* I feel confident that they have not only maintained the interests of their country, but they have secured the independence of Europe. My Lord Mayor, I need hardly have been at the interesting scene of this morning to feel that, although the citizens of London do justice, and more than justice, to the operations of the congress of Berlin and to the labours of my noble friend and myself in that assembly, the people of England are more interested, I believe, in the convention of Constantinople than even in the peace of Berlin.

"My Lord Mayor, Europe has a prospect now before her which she has never previously enjoyed. She has brought before her for her study and her development a great continent which nature has gifted with infinite wealth, but which, so far as its government and administration are concerned, has unhappily now for countless ages fallen to races deficient in the arts of government. I know it is said that the engagement which the Sultan of Turkey has entered into with us may be a mere paper engagement; and we are told that before this year—in 1856, at the peace of Paris—engagements of this kind were made for the reformation of the government of his dominions, and that, easily made, they have been completely evaded. But, my Lord Mayor, there is no similarity in the two positions. In the treaty of Paris there was no engagement on the part of the Sultan to Europe. In the convention of Constantinople there is a distinct engagement on the part of the Sultan to England; and, independently of the immense differences of the two situations—independently of the right and privilege of our interference, which under the convention of Constantinople we possess, we are not justified in saying that is not a hopeful task, even if we had not the right to appeal to the Sultan for the good government of his dominions. We have no right to assume that of his own motion he would not initiate and commence reforms, because I would call your recollection to one of the most remarkable documents that ever has appeared on this subject. I will not quote the despatches of consuls, whether English or Russian; some of them are full of valuable matter, but they may be naturally affected by the bias of their nations and parties. But," he said, alluding to the evidence of the American missionaries, who had warmly spoken in favour of Ottoman tolerance, and had frankly asserted that the so-called "Bulgarian atrocities" were gross exaggerations, "there was a body of men in Turkey—men of the highest principle, of even a sublime character—men who devoted their lives to the benefit of their fellow-creatures and sought no reward but the convictions of their own consciences—and these were the American missionaries.

"The American missionaries were scattered over every part of Turkey, and when this war commenced—on false pretences, in a great degree—the American missionaries addressed the Emperor of Germany and said it was their duty to tell him that they

had lived and laboured in every part of the Ottoman empire, and since the Crimean war and the treaty of Paris the improvement in the condition of the Christian subjects of the Porte was most remarkable. They mention in that document that the regard for life and property was now most striking. They mention in that document that education was very largely pursued, and that toleration was almost complete. But these changes could only be effected by the influence of the Sultan himself; for there was no power in Europe at that time which had the right to appeal to him or interfere in the government of his subjects. Therefore, I do not believe that we shall find, as some suppose, obstacles raised on the part of the Sultan himself against those great changes which are impending, and which if carried into effect will contribute so much to the wealth and welfare of the world.

"I will not dwell in detail on these matters. I saw, the day before yesterday, an Armenian of great reputation, a man who may be described as a statesman, and one who has held a great position in the countries where he has been employed. He said to me, 'There is only one thing to be done, one word is sufficient to describe the great experiment England is about to undertake. Let your motto be justice. If justice be exercised and maintained, you will find such a change in the character and conduct of the people that at the end of a very few years you will scarcely believe they are the same race.' I, therefore, look forward with great confidence to the policy of the government which has occupied Cyprus. I believe it will exercise a most beneficial influence over Asia Minor. The first duty of the government will be to secure tranquillity and order. When tranquillity and order are secured, which mainly depend upon the administration of justice, I should leave the rest with confidence to the energy and enterprise of Europe. I would not limit my hopes merely to the energy and enterprise of my countrymen; but I would welcome the ingenuity of Italy, I would welcome the invention of France, and I should rejoice if I saw those powers profiting, and profiting greatly, from operations first conceived and first set on foot by the determination of England.

"Before sitting down, my Lord Mayor, there is one remark I would ask permission to offer to your guests. Since I had any acquaintance with or control over public affairs, I never knew any time when the relations between the great powers of Europe were so essentially friendly as they are at the present moment. I make no exception with regard to Russia. We did not go to war, fortunately, with Russia, and the great statesmen with whom we were placed in communication knew well the great advantage in negotiating with England that warfare had not occurred between the two powers. I believe there are no men more anxious to develop the resources of their country than the leading men in Russia; and they feel the conviction that a restless and warlike spirit is one that must debase and perhaps even ruin their empire. With regard to the other powers, I will notice only one, and that is France, because," he said, in allusion to the gossip that France, irritated at first by the purchase of the Suez Canal shares, was now deeply offended at our occupation of Cyprus, "we have been favoured with accounts which certainly are totally at variance with those which reach my noble friend and myself. I should look upon it as one of the greatest misfortunes that ever happened to England if any estrangement occurred, between France and England, of those feelings of sincere and complete friendship which of late years have grown up between the two countries. England and France are united by so many bonds—there is so much sympathy between the two populations, the history of both countries is so interesting to each other—that I cannot myself easily conceive that between England and France there should ever occur feelings that would lead to misconception and to consequences more direful.

"I hope, my Lord Mayor, the time has come when I and my colleagues, who share your hospitality, may no longer have our conversation after dinner confined to wars and rumours of wars. It has been my fate for several years on these occasions to utter a warning voice to my country, and I am happy, I may say I am even proud, to feel that time has proved that the warning uttered was not without reason; but I trust that time is now past, and that it is upon the revival of trade, the development of industry and all the arts of civilization, that I shall have periodically to address the chief magistrate of the greatest city in the world. Then, my Lord Mayor, I shall feel I have a right to be a citizen of London. For my colleagues and myself permit me now to offer what I have offered before, but never with more sincerity and pride, my best acknowledgments for the great distinction you have done us in drinking our healths."

The hope with which Lord Beaconsfield closed his speech was not to be realized. After the feverish excitement of the past session the country was anxious to turn her attention to "all the arts of civilization," and enhance her commercial prosperity. Yet there were various obstacles in the path, barring the way to such a happy result. Wars and rumours of wars were still agitating the public mind. Trade was depressed, and the commercial failures—notably the collapse of the City of Glasgow bank—which frequently occurred did not tend to improve the condition of affairs. Conflicts between labour and capital were being waged in most of our shires. Every industry found that its receipts were falling off, whilst the same rate of expenditure had to be maintained—coal, iron, timber, cotton were all clamouring at the hard times. The middle classes, and that large portion of the community which lives on small fixed incomes and ever seeks a high rate of interest, were suffering severely from their savings having been invested in Turkish, Egyptian, and South American bonds, and in various speculations which, after promising large dividends, had ended by being wound up. Famines in India and China, and the fall in the price of silver, had reduced the value of our exports to those eastern markets, to such an extent that shipments of manufactures could only be carried on at a loss to the exporter. But of all these interests, the one that was in the most piteous condition was the agricultural. Even with fine weather on his side and his cattle free from plague, the life of the farmer—what with cheap grain from abroad, foreign cheeses, American beef, and Australian mutton—was a keen struggle for existence; but when it came to bad harvest after bad harvest, and yet the same rent to be paid and the same stand to be made against foreign competition, then indeed affairs began to wax desperate, not only with Hodge, but with his master and his master's master.

Whilst this state of things was rendering the country gloomy, and enabling unscrupulous Liberals to attribute the depression of trade to an ambitious and extravagant government, evil news reached our shores from the frontiers of our Indian empire. To counteract the influence of Russia on the Oxus and her intrigues at Cabul, the government had resolved to send a mission, headed by Sir Neville Chamberlain, to Shere Ali, one of the sons of Dost Mahomed, and at that time the Ameer of Afghanistan. Sir Neville was described as, "an officer of the highest class, a man carefully selected for the command of a separate army, and an experienced man in politics." It was expected that no obstacle would be put in the way of the envoy reaching Cabul; but no sooner had Sir Neville crossed the Afghan frontier than he was met at Ali Musjid by a trusted officer of the Ameer and informed that his advance, if persisted in, would be resisted by force. On the hills commanding the defile, he saw Afghan troops drawn up ready for action. To proceed under such circumstances would have been

criminal, since the English envoy had but a handful of followers; and accordingly Sir Neville came to a halt. Such a rebuff, in the face of the critical and observant East, was, however, not to be tolerated without remonstrance, and the envoy at once wrote to the Afghan commissioner in command of Ali Musjid—"I expect to receive a reply not later than September 18, so please understand that the matter is most urgent. At the same time it is my duty to inform you in a frank and friendly manner, that if your answer be not what I trust it will be, or if you delay to send an early reply, I have no alternative but to make whatever arrangements may seem to me best for carrying out the instructions I have received from my government."

The government was not prepared to treat this insult with indifference. The Ameer was to be taught that he was helpless against England, if she chose to exert her power. The mission was dissolved and the envoy recalled; the garrison of Quettah was strengthened, and troops were massed at the entrance of the Kurrum Valley. The route to the Kurrum Valley was through an open country to Cabul; and a force could advance to within seventy miles of that town, by entirely avoiding the Khyber Pass. The object of this demonstration was not to meditate an attack on Cabul, but to show the Ameer how helpless was his position. An additional interest was given to these preparations from the fact, that whilst the Ameer was refusing to receive an English mission, a Russian envoy had been all the time ensconced at Cabul; and that it was through his instigations that so grave a slight had been passed upon the power of England. We might have ignored a rebuff from a savage chieftain; but it was quite another matter to allow that chieftain to be the puppet of the Muscovite, and so suffer our rival in the East to quietly obtain possession of a country which was the gateway to India. "Russia may extend herself," said our leading journal, "as she pleases in another direction. She must leave Afghanistan alone. If the Ameer of Cabul is not sensible of the danger which he is courting by his intimacy with Russia, we must be wise for him and for ourselves. The Ameer must make his choice between England as his enemy and as his friend. He cannot continue to be independent in name while he is becoming in reality a tool of Russia, which she may use for her own purposes. It is this which we are now minded to prevent; and we shall not shrink from employing whatever means we may find necessary for so doing."

Nor was this resolve on the part of England anything new in the history of Indian diplomacy. Both at Cabul and St. Petersburg it had long been known, that neither at Calcutta nor at London would Russian influence be tolerated in Afghanistan. Russia had herself solemnly declared in several despatches to the Indian government, that Cabul should never come within the limits of her Asiatic enterprise; and in her turn, Afghanistan had promised that if ever the Muscovite attempted to influence her proceedings, she would turn a deaf ear to his counsels. Yet, in spite of these sworn pledges, Russia had despatched an embassy to Cabul, which had been received with every sign of welcome and cordiality. To the observant Eastern mind, ever criticising the strength of the rival powers, the reception of the Muscovite at Cabul signified the overthrow of English influence. To counteract this impression Lord Lytton, the viceroy of India selected by Lord Beaconsfield to succeed the weak and hesitating Lord Northbrook, had with admirable promptitude despatched Sir Neville Chamberlain at the head of a counter-embassy, to prove to the sensitive East that if Russia was welcomed at Cabul, England was equally a favourite, and that the Ameer was exhibiting no partiality. Then came the order stopping the progress of the English embassy; and the natives of India were made plainly to see that in the opinion

of Afghanistan the Czar was to be propitiated in preference to the newly-created Empress of Hindostan. Such a verdict, it was felt, if British influence in the East was to be maintained, must at once be set aside. There might be room, as Lord Beaconsfield had said, for both Russia and England in the East so long as both were regarded as powers of equal strength; but there could be no room for the two rivals when the one was considered the superior, and was endeavouring to establish its influence on neutral territory.

Whilst the government of India was making its preparations to chastise the insolence of the Ameer, and Sir Frederick Haines was collecting his troops to take the field, the approaching hostilities led to much discussion at home. The Liberals failed to see that, because Lord Beaconsfield was no more in favour of submitting to rebuffs in Asia than he had been in Europe, we should go to war with the Afghans. There is seldom much originality in the policy of an Opposition; it has but to take the contrary view to the government of the day, and its policy is complete. On this occasion the Liberals banded themselves closely together, to thwart the tactics of ministers, and to vent their spite which had hitherto been voided in vain upon the author of the Berlin treaty. Once more they had the opportunity of proving themselves the friends of Russia, and the credulous believers in her Central Asian policy. Russia, they cried, in spite of all their past experiences, had no designs whatever upon our Indian empire; she was ever marching southwards over the snows, not because she envied the sunny climes and gorgeous wealth of Hindostan, but because she wished the savage tribes of Central Asia to become her subjects, in order to win them over to Christianity; the refusal of the Ameer to receive the English embassy had not been due to Russian influence; Russia had no other object in Afghanistan than the promotion of friendship and the development of commerce; it was only, sneered these peculiar patriots, another instance of the monomania of Lord Beaconsfield to imagine otherwise. Russia had herself declared, they ingenuously said, that she entertained no aggressive intentions, and surely a power that had acted always so honourably and with such good faith throughout all her diplomatic negotiations was deserving of the fullest credit. Indeed, so infatuated were the Liberals with the Czar and all his doings, that they formed themselves into an "Afghan committee," with the patriotic object of hampering the action of the government.

This factious opposition, though it embarrassed the cabinet and irritated Lord Lytton, was, however, happily powerless to cause ministers to swerve from the policy they had set before them — to check Russian interference in Afghanistan, and to have ample reparation for the insult passed upon Sir Neville Chamberlain. This reparation, it soon appeared, could only be obtained by force of arms. The Ameer declined to apologize, and bade us "do our worst and let God decide the issue." A term of grace was accorded him; and he was clearly warned of the consequences of his acts, did he continue in his stubborn resistance. The terms of the ultimatum were a full apology, the reception of the mission, and the rectification of the Afghan frontier. During this feverish period of suspense, when the one thought uppermost in the minds of men both in England and in India was, What answer will the Ameer return to this second appeal? the banquet to ministers at the Guildhall took place. It was expected that Lord Beaconsfield would take the opportunity, now that parliament was not sitting, and that information could only be obtained from the contradictory intelligence contained in the newspapers, of admitting the country into his confidence as to the precise position which the Afghan dispute had assumed. Nor was this expectation disappointed, for the prime minister

addressed himself with a welcome directness to the prevailing state of public feeling. Two matters connected with the "Eastern question" were then causing much anxiety—the first, that various details agreed upon in the Berlin treaty had not been carried out; and the second, that owing to the complications in Afghanistan, a Russian invasion of India was not impossible by the north-west frontier, and that such frontier ought to be rearranged.

It was evident that the provisions of the treaty of Berlin required time before they could be carried into effect. At first difficulties—difficulties fully anticipated by Lord Beaconsfield—arose. Bosnia and Herzegovina objected to the Austrian occupation; Turkey ignored the claims of Greece, and the latter country had appealed to the powers in vain; Eastern Roumelia was intriguing for union with the free Bulgaria; Albania was in a state of revolt; and Roumania objected to yield up Bessarabia. Altogether the scene was one of discontent and strife; and the Liberal party had jumped to the conclusion that, after all the pomp and noise with which the Berlin treaty had been ushered into the world, the document was but so much waste paper, and would not be acted upon. This impression, we shall see, Lord Beaconsfield was not slow in correcting. Alterations in the map of Europe, even when agreed upon, cannot be carried into effect in a few weeks' notice. The great diplomatist Time has to be consulted and to be deferred to.

The rectification of the Afghan frontier was the main subject upon which the minds of all Anglo-Indians had been exercised during the past autumn. One governor-general took one view and imparted his opinions to the journal he affected, and another governor-general took another view and also ventilated his opinions; but on the whole, the balance of the discussion was in favour of a rearrangement of the north-west frontier. With Afghanistan in the hands of Russia an entrance into India might be effected; and it was wise statesmanship to prevent even the possibility of danger. It was therefore proposed that in the north-west provinces we should improve our position, by entering the mountains and taking possession of the passes in our immediate front. These suggestions had not been lost upon the government, as we shall gather from the following speech of Lord Beaconsfield when replying to the toast of "Her Majesty's ministers."

"My Lord Mayor," said the prime minister (November 9, 1878), "a year ago, when I had the honour of addressing your predecessor in this hall upon a similar occasion to the present, a terrible war was waging in the East of Europe, the termination of which was not visible, and a general fear prevailed that the whole world might be drawn into its vortex. I ventured then to take not so gloomy a view as was then prevalent; and I expressed a hope that before we met again there would be a congress of the great powers of Europe, that peace would be obtained, and a settlement made of the questions in controversy which would be a satisfactory and enduring one. Rumours, however, are now rife, my Lord Mayor, that the settlement which was made at Berlin has failed in effecting the end which, not merely for the interests of this country, but of humanity, we counted upon. We are told that it has already broken down, and that the position of affairs is unsatisfactory and even perilous.

"I therefore think, my Lord Mayor, that on this occasion it will be advantageous that I should state the views of Her Majesty's government on the present situation of the country with regard to its external relations. And first, let me refer to a matter of immediate interest. One would suppose, from all we hear, that our Indian empire is on the eve of being invaded, and that we were about to enter into a struggle with some powerful and unknown foe. Your lordship is well aware of the present state of affairs on the north-western frontier of India. In the first place, my Lord Mayor, Her Majesty's

government are by no means apprehensive of any invasion of England by our north-western frontier. The base of operations of any possible foe is so remote, the communications are so difficult, the aspect of the country is so forbidding, that we do not believe under these circumstances any invasion of our north-western frontier is practicable.

"But our north-western frontier is *a haphazard and not a scientific frontier.* It is in the power of any foe so to embarrass and disturb our dominion, that we should be obliged to maintain the presence of a great military force in that quarter, entailing on the country a proportionate expenditure. These are unquestionably great evils, and former viceroys have had their attention called with anxiety to the state of our frontier. Recently, however, some peculiar circumstances have occurred in that part of the world, which have convinced Her Majesty's government that the time has arrived when we must terminate all this inconvenience and prevent all this possible injury. With this view we have made arrangements by which, when completed, in all probability at no distant day, all anxiety respecting the north-western frontier of India will be removed. We shall live, I hope, on good terms with our immediate neighbours, and not on bad terms, perhaps, with some neighbours that are more remote.

"I do not wish, my Lord Mayor, in making these remarks, that you should understand that Her Majesty's government are of opinion that an invasion of India is impossible or impracticable. On the contrary, if Asia Minor and the valley of the Euphrates were in the possession of a very weak or very powerful state, it would be by no means impossible for an adequate army to march through the passes of Asia Minor and through Persia and absolutely menace the dominions of the queen; but Her Majesty's government have contemplated such a result, and *we have provided means to prevent its occurrence by our convention with Turkey and our occupation of the isle of Cyprus.* By that convention we have secured that those regions should remain in the possession of our ally, supported by subjects growing in population and in material wealth, who will thus add greatly to the strength and authority of the Sultan. In order to encourage, strengthen, and aid the Sultan, we have felt that it was not wise that he should look forward only to an ambiguous or a distant assistance; but that we should occupy, with his entire concurrence, a place of arms where he would feel that if any danger prevented him from carrying into effect those changes for the regeneration of his country which he has agreed, and willingly agreed, to make, he could look with confidence for the assistance of an ally close and contiguous to his own frontier.

"As I am touching on this subject, perhaps it would not be uninteresting to the citizens of London to learn that Cyprus will be no burden to this country; and that even this year, when the methods of administration of England have necessarily only partially been applied, it will furnish not merely the sum annually accrued to the Sultan, but the whole expenditure of its civil government. There is no doubt, my lord, that the administration of Cyprus by England will exercise the most beneficial and moral influence upon the contiguous dominions of the Sultan. But this was a secondary consideration in inducing us to take the step which we have done. It was *as a strong place of arms,* for which it is admirably calculated by its geographical position and the variety of its resources, that we fixed upon Cyprus, after having examined all the other islands in the east of the Mediterranean. My lord, I have shown you that if the policy of Her Majesty's ministers is carried into effect; if that rectification of our north-western frontier is consummated; and if Asia Minor remains —as, in my opinion, it will remain—in the possession of our ally, and if it becomes a country which, from the steps we are now

taking, will I hope every year increase in prosperity and power—*the English people may dismiss from their minds all anxiety as to the external enemies of their Indian empire.*

"But, my Lord Mayor, the Eastern question, which is in everybody's mouth, has a double aspect. It is not merely the safety of our Indian empire which we should consider—not that this is a selfish consideration, because the world is equally with England interested in the prosperity and good government of India; but there is another aspect of the Eastern question, and that involves the independence of Europe, and especially of the Mediterranean powers. I will say of all powers, because the policy which we would pursue would prevent the fatal supremacy of any individual state. How that great end was to be secured, so far as the opinion of England was concerned, was by establishing the Sultan *as a truly independent prince.* When we repaired to the congress of Berlin that object was equally professed by all the future signatory powers of that treaty. It has been said that the Sultan, by the negotiations of the treaty of Berlin, has been deprived of provinces and many millions of subjects. Now, the policy that was pursued at the congress of Berlin was this. It was to extricate the Sultan from those ruinous relations with pseudo-feudatories or small tribes differing in race or religion, but who were the constant and ready instruments of hostile external influences against the Porte, and who carried on affairs in such a manner that really the greater part of the European territories of the Sultan was the scene of chronic conspiracy, varied only by occasional insurrection—it was to extricate the Sultan from this source of constant exhaustion that the provisions were agreed to at the congress of Berlin which now regulate the position of the Sultan in Europe.

"Following this policy, the congress of Berlin secured for the Sultan an impregnable capital, the custody, guardianship, and possession of the Straits, rich provinces in European Turkey, the most valuable harbour in the Black Sea, and generally speaking, an intelligible frontier. A prince so circumstanced, if at the same time he could rest upon the basis of 20,000,000 of Asian subjects, constantly improving by their administration in their wealth, in their resources and power—a prince so circumstanced would have no inconsiderable influence, and could exercise that influence in the maintenance of the political balance. I know, my Lord Mayor, it is said that these views, however plausible, have not been carried into effect, and that the treaty of Berlin already has proved to be inadequate to carry the results which it aimed at into operation. *If the grave matters which were settled at Berlin could have been settled in twenty-four hours a congress was unnecessary.* They might have been settled by post or by the queen's messengers. Whenever a treaty has emanated from a great congress, it has always provided that *a certain time should be allowed to carry the regulations into effect.* The treaty of Berlin is not different from other treaties in this respect. A certain period is provided for and prescribed, during which interval the agreements and regulations of the treaty were to be carried into execution. Of that period not half—not much more than one-third—has already elapsed.

"Has nothing been done during that time under the treaty of Berlin? Under the provisions of the treaty of Berlin Russia has retired from Constantinople, which was within her grasp. Under the provisions of the treaty of Berlin Russia has retired from the Straits of Gallipoli, second only in importance to Constantinople, and by some deemed equivalent to it. Under the provisions of the treaty of Berlin Russia has restored to the Porte the city of Erzeroum, which soon will in all probability be the scene of the strongest fortifications in Asia Minor. Under the provisions of the treaty of Berlin the Sultan has surrendered his fortresses on the Danube. Under the provisions of the

treaty of Berlin the bay of Batoum, which it was said could never be obtained except by a sanguinary civil war, has been given up without shedding a single drop of blood. Under the provisions of the treaty of Berlin at this moment there are committees and commissions, formed of the most able subjects of the different states of Europe, arranging the lines of demarcation for the different states and provinces created by the treaty of Berlin. Why, *these are the most considerable points of the treaty.* Little more than three months have elapsed —hardly a third, or not much more than one-third of the time provided by the treaty has elapsed—yet these great results have been obtained; and why are we to believe that all the others—not so important, generally speaking—which remain unconcluded, will not be consummated in the time provided for by the treaty? This I can say for Her Majesty's government, that we have never received any intimation whatever *from any of the signatories of that treaty that it is their desire or their intention to evade the complete fulfilment of its conditions.*

"Unquestionably, in settling the affairs of Europe at Berlin, the claims of one of the belligerents who, at immense sacrifices of men and treasure, had conducted the war to a triumphant end were considered, and it was necessary that those claims should be recognized and considered. In the first place, if the powers were not prepared to recognize and consider these claims, the congress could never have been held, the war might have gone on, and probably a general war would have resulted; but subject to these considerations, which were the necessary consequence of having conducted a successful war as Russia had done, the principal object of the congress at Berlin was to establish the Sultan as a truly independent prince, with an adequate territory, both in Europe and Asia, to allow him to become a member who would contribute to the maintenance of the political equilibrium. That was the policy acknowledged, and that was the policy which I believe will be pursued. I must, therefore, disclaim and repudiate those notions, which I am greatly surprised have been circulated, that the signatories or any signatory of the treaty contemplates the possibility of evading or avoiding his engagements.

"They say, my lord, that in politics you ought to contemplate the impossible. I think it at this moment quite impossible that any of the signatories of the treaty of Berlin would attempt in any way to withdraw from their engagements; but this I can say, on *the part of Her Majesty's government, that they will not be the signatory to retire.* I can say this on the part of Her Majesty's government, that it is their policy and their determination that the treaty of Berlin should be carried out in spirit and to the letter; and believing that the settlement of Berlin expressed in the treaty is one that will advance the progress and civilization of the world, and that it includes provisions admirably adapted to secure peace and the maintenance of peace, Her Majesty's government would, if necesary, appeal with confidence to the people of this country to support them in maintaining to the letter and the complete spirit the treaty of Berlin with all their energy and all their resources. But, my Lord Mayor, I will not believe that we can, under any circumstances, be driven to a course which otherwise we shall be determined to pursue, because I will give credit to the signatories of the treaty for an honourable fulfilment of their engagements.

"I admit that there are paragraphs in newspapers of a different import; I admit that there is gossip, which may not even be authentic, reported by the subalterns of different states, who may have expressed a different opinion. But the government of the world is carried on *by sovereigns and statesmen, and not by anonymous paragraph-writers, or by the harebrained chatter of irresponsible frivolity;* and therefore, my Lord Mayor, I look with confidence to the treaty of Berlin being carried out completely within

the period provided for the completion of its arrangements; and I believe that by carrying that treaty into effect, we shall secure and maintain an enduring peace in Europe.

"My Lord Mayor, I have observed that the month of October is often rife with high secrets of state. In the month of November they are not so numerous. I ascribe that result to the beneficial influence, in some respects, of Lord Mayor's Day. On Lord Mayor's Day there is a chance of hearing the voice of sense and truth; but when parliament meets it is astonishing how the flock of all these political wild fowl fly from the country, and seek a more congenial clime of intrigue and imposture. Well, my Lord Mayor, I have spoken of the situation of affairs without reserve. I have thought it not inexpedient on the part of the government to tell you exactly what our views of the situation are. That the state of affairs at present is serious no one can doubt, because they must ever be serious when a great settlement is taking place and is not yet accomplished; but I deny that they are affairs of danger. I know there are some who think that the power of England is on the wane. We have been informed lately that ours will be the lot of Genoa, and Venice, and Holland. But, my Lord Mayor, there is a great difference between the condition of England and those picturesque and interesting communities. We have during ages of prosperity created a nation of 34,000,000—a nation who are enjoying, and have long enjoyed, the two greatest blessings of civil life—justice and liberty. My Lord Mayor, a nation of that character is more calculated *to create empires than to give them up;* and I feel confident if England is true to herself, if the English people prove themselves worthy of their ancestors, if they possess still the courage and the determination of their forefathers, their honour will never be tarnished and their power will never diminish. The fate of England is in the hands of England; and you must place no credit on those rumours which would induce you to believe, that you have neither the power nor the principle to assert that policy which you believe is a policy of justice and truth."

A few days after this speech, war broke out between England and Afghanistan. The Ameer declined to apologize; he denied that he had exhibited any ill-feeling to the British government. He had no wish to be at enmity with any power; but, he said, "when any other power, without cause or reason, shows enmity towards this government, the matter is left in the hands of God and to His will." Upon this refusal Lord Lytton declared war. In the proclamation that he issued on the occasion, he summed up the complaints which the government laid at the door of the Ameer. In spite of the assistance which the Ameer had received from the British government, and the benefits he had enjoyed by free trade with India, he had, complained the viceroy, returned nothing but ill-will and discourtesy; he had openly and assiduously endeavoured to stir up religious hatred, and to incite war against the British empire in India; he had repelled all efforts to bring about amicable intercourse with the Indian government, and yet he had formally received a Russian embassy; finally, while the Russian embassy was still at Cabul, he had forcibly repulsed an English envoy, of whose coming he had timely notice. The proclamation thus concluded—"Upon the Ameer, Shere Ali, alone rests the responsibility of having exchanged the friendship for the hostility of the Empress of India." The Ameer had soon reason to regret his reckless obstinacy. The English troops, under the valiant Sir Samuel Browne, at the very outset of the invasion gained a brilliant triumph. The fort of Ali Musjid was captured, after a severe opposition on the part of the enemy; and a few days afterwards General Roberts defeated the Afghans at Peiwar.

Such was the situation of affairs when parliament was opened early in December. The necessity for so early a meeting was

explained in the speech from the throne. "I regret," said Her Majesty, "that I have been obliged to call for your attendance at an unusual, and probably to most of you an inconvenient season. The hostility towards my government manifested by the Ameer of Afghanistan, and the manner in which he repulsed my friendly mission, left me no alternative but to make a peremptory demand for redress. The demand having been disregarded, I have directed an expedition to be sent into his territory, and I have taken the earliest opportunity of calling you together, and making to you the communications required by law."

In the Upper House only a brief debate ensued on the address, as it had been arranged by Lord Granville, the leader of the Opposition, that all discussion as to the cause and necessity of the Afghan war should be reserved for the following Monday, when Viscount Cranbrook was to bring a special motion as to the expendidure of the war before the House. Lord Granville, however, in spite of the suggested adjournment of the debate, passed some severe strictures upon the government for having entered into hostilities with the Ameer; and Earl Grey moved, for the first time for many years, an amendment to the address, to the effect that when ministers considered war probable, parliament ought to have been summoned to provide for the expenses and to consider the grounds upon which hostilities might be declared.

Lord Beaconsfield made a few remarks on the occasion (December 5, 1878). He could not, he said, support the amendment of Earl Grey, though he quite agreed that there were occasions when amendments to the address were desirable, expedient, and politic. He might speak with some authority on the subject, since he was probably the only member of that House who had, in his time, moved an amendment to the address. Then passing to the matter before the House, Lord Beaconsfield complained that the leader of the Opposition had held up "to depreciation and ridicule the viceroy of the queen, who is at this moment incurring the greatest responsibility, and on the devotion of whose intelligence more, perhaps, depends than on that of any other individual in the country." He denied that the war in Afghanistan was, as Lord Granville had alleged, an unjust war. It was mere assumption. "If the war is unjust and impolitic, prove it. Bring forward your reasons and your arguments. Assail our policy and give us the proofs on which your opinions are founded. Do this and we will meet you, and the House and the country will decide." Then he defended the occupation of Cyprus from the charge made against it by Lord Granville. "When the noble earl turns round and ridicules the occupation of Cyprus and the objects for which we undertook that occupation, I will tell him that it is not easy in language to describe the advantages of that position; and when the noble earl assumes that the island is wanting in many qualities which were announced and that its acquisition was a blunder, I can assure him that the conditions for which we agreed to occupy that island have been entirely fulfilled. I repeat without the slightest fear, after communication with my colleagues who have recently visited it,* that it will be, as I formerly said, most important as 'a place of arms,' as affording a capacious harbour for our navy, and unlimited convenience for the quartering of Her Majesty's forces. It has entirely fulfilled our expectations, and I believe will soon be recognized as one of the most important and influential positions under the dominion of Her Majesty."

On the appointed Monday (December 10, 1878), Lord Cranbrook moved, "That Her Majesty, having directed a military expedition of her forces, charged upon Indian revenues, to be despatched against the Ameer of Afghanistan, this House consents that the revenues of India shall be applied to defray the expenses of the

* Colonel Stanley and Mr. W. H. Smith visited Cyprus in the autumn, and reported most favourably of the island.

military operations which may be carried on beyond the external frontiers of Her Majesty's Indian possessions." In support of his motion Lord Cranbrook delivered an eloquent and closely-reasoned speech. He proved how the Russians had been intriguing at Cabul, and having discovered that Afghanistan was the weak point in our armour, thought "they could turn our watch-dog, the Ameer, into a bloodhound against us." He explained that the whole object of our entering into hostilities was to obtain a safe frontier, and detailed at some length the history of our connection with, Afghanistan. He defended Lord Lytton from the attacks that had been made upon him, and was careful to state that the viceroy had only carried out the policy of the government, which held itself responsible for all that had been done. It was impossible, argued Lord Cranbrook, not to have resented the affront put upon us by refusing the mission of Sir Neville to proceed, whilst the Russian envoy had been received with every mark of warmth and favour. There might be room in Central Asia, he said amid loud cheers, for both England and Russia; but certainly there was not room for both powers in Afghanistan. He then pointed out that the finances of India were in such a condition that the cost of the war, for the present financial year, which he estimated at some £1,200,000, would be met by the surplus current revenue, and that there would then remain a balance of £500,000. Lord Cranbrook concluded by asserting the justice of our cause, and called upon the peers to support the original motion for the sake of the honour and safety of Her Majesty's Indian possessions.

In response to this appeal, Lord Halifax rose to strongly condemn the war, and moved an amendment to the effect that the House, "while ready to consent to providing the means necessary for bringing the war in which we are unhappily engaged to a safe and honourable conclusion, regrets the conduct pursued by the government, which has unnecessarily engaged this country in the contest." An important debate ensued, during which both sides of the question were fully discussed. The Opposition were in favour of the amendment; they maintained that it would be unwise to go beyond the present north-western frontier of India, and thus anticipate the attacks of Russia; that we were bound by our former treaties to respect the territory of the Ameer, and had no right to force a resident on him; that the policy adopted by the Conservative party towards Russia was of a very doubtful character, and not such as was calculated to strengthen England or her prestige in India; that the affront passed upon Sir Neville Chamberlain was not one which deserved to be wiped out in blood; and that the annexation of the Border territories, as proposed, would entail a large expenditure to subjugate the brave and independent mountaineers by whom those territories were then held. Both Lord Derby and Lord Carnarvon held these views, and strongly condemned the recent policy of the government.

On the other hand, the Conservative party as warmly vindicated the course that had been adopted. The House was asked to imagine the northern part of Scotland in the hands of a warlike and independent nation, with a vast and ambitious empire to the north again, but "tending to the southward;" then to add a range of high hills between England and Scotland, and the analogy would be complete. Under such a condition of things, would the House, they inquired, trouble itself about "diplomatic etiquette?" Would it not rather urge the government to take such steps as would be absolutely necessary to make secure the position of that country in regard to that northern neighbour? The present boundary was a cause of much danger and inconvenience, and all scientific military officers were of opinion that, for the safety of the Indian empire, it required rectification. It was blind and idle to undervalue the advance of Russia in Central

Asia. Energetic remonstrances had been tried, and had failed. War had been declared, not because the Ameer had received a Russian envoy, but because he had refused to receive an English envoy.

Lord Beaconsfield closed the debate. He began (December 10, 1878) by deeming it advisable that some general conception of the north-western boundary should be laid before the House. That boundary, that north-western boundary of their Indian empire, was a branch of a chain of mountains the highest in the world—higher even than the Andes—yet no portion of that frontier was in possession of the inhabitants of the Indian empire or the Indian government; thus through its passes invading armies might make their raids, or wild and turbulent tribes might ravage the fertile plains intrusted to the English government in that part of the world. The inconvenience of such a boundary was felt, and had been more than once the subject of cabinet consideration.

"Well now, my lords," proceeded the prime minister, "let us look for a moment to the facts of the case. We have been in possession of this boundary for, I believe, twenty-eight years. During that period we have been obliged to fit out nineteen considerable expeditions to control its inhabitants, between fifty and sixty guerilla enterprises, and have employed upon these expeditions between 50,000 and 60,000 of Her Majesty's troops. All I can say is that if none of the viceroys of India who are the acquaintances of the noble lord [Lord Halifax had stated that no viceroy of his acquaintance had ever complained of the state of the boundary] have felt the inconvenience, or if they have been insensible to the injury of such a boundary, they were not fit to be viceroys. But I cannot believe that that is the case. My information would lead me to a very different result. The government of India is not merely a concern of viceroys, but it is a concern of statesmen, both eminent civilians and military leaders of world-wide renown; and it was the information which I derived from one of the most eminent individuals of that character and class, that influenced me to make that observation which I made. That eminent personage was for a considerable time a member of the Indian administration. He was not prejudiced in favour of the views adopted by Her Majesty's government. For a considerable period, notwithstanding his sense of the inconvenience and the injury of this boundary, he was one of those who opposed any change, because he believed it was better to incur that inconvenience and injury than to embark on the difficult office of making a fresh boundary, and disturbing arrangements which were necessarily of a political character. Remembering the possibility of some power equal to our own attacking us in that part of the world, and remembering also that some ten years ago that power was 2000 miles distant from our boundaries, a man might consistently have upheld the arrangement that then existed, and yet might by the force of circumstances and the lapse of time be now a sincere supporter of the policy which Her Majesty's government now recommends.

"That, for instance, is the case of Lord Napier of Magdala. It was only recently that I received a telegram from him in which he says, '*A careful study of our frontier convinces me that a rectification of it is necessary.*' Those are the words of one of great experience and of consummate ability and judgment, who for a long time was opposed to that which he now finds is absolutely necessary. He does not shrink from the use of the word 'rectification,' although definitions of that word have been given by many noble lords opposite which are not to be found in any dictionary. The noble earl [Earl Grey], who resumed the debate to-night, spoke of rectification as though it were another phrase for spoliation and annexation. I expected those cheers and wished to receive them. Another noble earl [Lord Carnar-

von] who spoke in the debate yesterday—I wrote down his words, because unfortunately on a previous occasion he seemed to accuse me of misquoting him—said, 'I hate the word "rectification." It seems to me to savour of the worst traditions of the French empire—a word to conceal wrong and robbery.' A noble marquis [Marquis of Ripon] described it as a dark word, and he seemed to tremble as he uttered it. For my own part I cannot agree in any of these definitions. The rectification of our frontier is a correct diplomatic term, which is accepted by the highest authorities and which has a precise and a definite meaning. The rectification of frontiers, instead of being a word of the French empire, had been long adopted, and your lordships will be surprised to find that the peace of the world very much depends upon those treaties. If all the treaties for the rectification of frontiers were destroyed as instruments of the terrible kind described by noble lords opposite and by the noble earl on the cross benches, the peace of the world would be endangered, and might be destroyed.

"Well, my lords, after that observation the other night, I took a note of some treaties for the rectification of frontiers, and I took them on conditions which I am sure your lordships will agree are fair. First of all, they are all modern—I would not produce old specimens. Secondly, they are not only modern treaties, but treaties none of which were entered into or negotiated after a war. Therefore they are not the consequences of force or fraud. Now, I find that from 1856 to 1868—quite in our own time—there were five treaties between France and Spain for the rectification of frontiers; and I have no hesitation myself in saying that if any of those treaties had not taken place, there would have been war between France and Spain, and that the existence of those treaties prevented war. Between France and Switzerland there was a treaty for the rectification of frontiers in December, 1862—a treaty of some celebrity—one which was certainly not a dark instrument. It was a treaty which certainly has contributed to the maintenance of peace. There is a treaty between Great Britain and France for the rectification of frontiers, and it might surprise one to find a treaty of that kind between an island and a continent; but it had reference to their possessions in the East Indies. That is a modern treaty. There is a treaty for the rectification of frontiers between Italy and Switzerland, and one between Portugal and the Transvaal, of which I believe the noble earl on the cross benches has some knowledge. To make it complete, there is a treaty for the rectification of frontiers between Great Britain and an Oriental kingdom like Afghanistan—the kingdom of Siam.

"Now, I believe the number of those treaties I have mentioned—some dozen—might be doubled or even trebled if it were necessary. The observation of the noble earl [Earl Grey] deserves remark. A rectification of frontiers does not necessarily involve a diminution of territory. Many such treaties are carried on by an equivalent. I made no application of those treaties to any case like Afghanistan. I have not touched upon that point yet. The noble earl is impetuous. It has been said that I stated the object of the war to be a rectification of frontier—the substitution of a scientific for a haphazard frontier. But in the first place, I never said that was the object of the war; I treated it *as a possible consequence of the war*, which is a very different thing. Our application to the Ameer was, in fact, founded upon the principle of rectifying our frontier without any disturbance of territory whatever.

"What was our difficulty with regard to Afghanistan? We could gain no information as to what was going on beyond the mountain range, or what was preparing in the numerous valleys of Afghanistan. What we wanted, therefore, were eyes to see and ears to hear, and we should have attained our object had the Ameer made to us those

concessions which are commonly granted by all civilized states, and which even some Oriental states do not deny us; namely, to have a minister at his capital—a demand which we did not press—and men like our consuls-general at some of his chief towns. That virtually would have been a rectification of our frontier, because we should have got rid of those obstacles that rendered it utterly impossible for us to conduct public affairs with any knowledge of the circumstances with which we had to deal as regarded Afghanistan. Therefore, the noble earl is precipitate in concluding, because I am in favour of a rectification of frontier, that necessarily any change would occur. I only say that abstractedly there is no absolute necessity for any change, because you may rectify a frontier in different ways—by equivalents, and so forth.

"But, my lords, my observations on that subject in another place* were made rather with reference in my mind to certain wild ideas that were prevalent, to the effect that it was the intention of the government to conquer Afghanistan and annex it to our empire. I explained that that was not our object, and that a scientific rectification of our frontier would effect for us all the is results we desired. And, my lords, what is a scientific frontier compared with a haphazard one? Why, it is, as a great military authority has said, this—*a scientific frontier can be defended with a garrison of* 5000 *men, while with a haphazard one you may require an army of* 100,000 *men, and even then not be safe from sudden attack.* It is not for us now to consider what arrangements may be made with this object, further than to say that Her Majesty's ministers, after all that has occurred, will feel it their duty to take care of the security of the Indian empire. Whatever may be the objections to the present north-western frontier of our Indian empire, I have no doubt things would have gone on in the same way; members of the Indian administration would have been equally conscious of the deficiencies of that frontier; and yet so difficult is the task of amending the frontier, and so great are the obstacles which certainly present themselves, things would have gone on, I dare say, as they had gone on for twenty-eight years, had it not been for the sudden appearance of Russia in the immediate vicinity of Afghanistan.

"I speak on that subject with frankness. It is, no doubt, much easier to speak of it now than it would have been a year ago, or eight months ago. Eight months ago war was more than probable between this country and Russia, and a word might have precipitated that war. At present we know from the language of the gracious speech from the throne that Her Majesty's relations with all powers are friendly, and they are not less friendly with Russia than with any other power.† I will say of the expedition which Russia was preparing in Central Asia at the time when she believed that war was inevitable between our country and herself —I will say at once that I hold that all those preparations on the part of Russia were perfectly allowable; and if war had occurred of course they would have contributed to bring about the ultimate result, whatever it might have been. Had we been in the position of Russia, I doubt not we might have undertaken some enterprise of a similar kind. No doubt there were a great many wild expressions uttered by persons of some authority. No doubt there have been dreams indulged in by individuals which were never realized. I dare say there are Russian officers who would not have disliked to cool the hoofs of their horses in the waters of the Indus; on the other hand, I dare say, there were some English soldiers who would have liked to catch a glance of the Caspian, and to have exclaimed θάλαττα, like the soldiers of Xenophon. We may now dismiss from our consideration all these dreams and wild

See Speech at Guildhall, Nov. 9, 1878.

† "I receive from all foreign powers assurances of their friendly feelings, and have every reason to believe that the arrangements for the pacification of Europe, made by the treaty of Berlin, will be successfully carried out."

expressions, and admit that if war had occurred between the two countries, all the preparations in Central Asia against great Britain in India were perfectly justifiable; but when it was found out that war was not to be made, Her Majesty's government made courteous representations to St. Petersburg, and it was impossible that anything could be more frank and satisfactory than the manner in which they were met. The Emperor of Russia said, 'It is very true we did intend to injure you as much as we could on your Indian border, but war has not occurred. War, I trust, will not occur between Russia and England. We have already given orders for the troops to retire to their old stations beyond the Oxus; our ambassador shall be merely considered as a provisional ambassador on a mission of courtesy, and as soon as possible he shall return.' I think that was sufficient and satisfactory conduct on the part of Russia in regard to this matter.

"But it is totally impossible for us, after all that has occurred, to leave things as they were. After you had found the Russian armies almost in sight of Afghanistan, and their embassy within the walls of Cabul, you could not go on with the old system, and indulge in the fancy that your frontier was a becoming and secure frontier in the circumstances. It was, therefore, absolutely necessary to consider what course we should take. The noble earl, who spoke last night from the cross bench, made a most ingenious speech, marked by all his characteristics. [Lord Derby had approved of the Afghan policy to the year 1877, but after that date had strongly censured it.] I never was more pleased. I listened for a long time to what seemed a complete vindication of the government; and remembering it came from an old comrade in arms with whom I had worked for a quarter of a century with entire concert, who had left me unfortunately from circumstances over which he had no control, I thought he was making the *amende* by taking an early opportunity of vindicating the policy of the government. But before sitting down, all that romantic flutter of the heart which I had experienced entirely ceased when I found that, notwithstanding his approbation of the government policy, he was going to vote for the amendment. What surprised me more than anything was the reason he gave for it, and that was because we did not go to war with Russia. The noble lord said, 'If you acted logically and properly you ought to have gone to war with Russia, and therefore I must vote for the amendment.' 'You ought not only to have gone to war with Russia, but in regard to Afghanistan you ought to have treated the Ameer with more courtesy and kindness. You ought to have made appeals to him, and taken every step which might gain his consideration and influence his policy.' My lords, that is the course which we have pursued. Really, the Ameer of Afghanistan has been treated like a spoiled child. He has had messages sent to him, he has had messengers offered to him. He has sent messengers to us, who have been courteously received. We have written him letters, some of which he has not answered, and others he has answered with unkindness. What more could we do? Yet the noble earl is going to vote against the government, because with, we think, an imperfect conception of our conduct, he says we have behaved harshly to the Ameer, and not taken the proper course of behaving hostilely to Russia. But, then, remember Russia has taken every step in this business so as to make honourable amends to England, and her conduct presents the most striking contrast to that furnished by the Ameer.

"Then there was another point which at this late hour of the night I cannot dwell upon, but which I will notice, because it has been treated with misconception. It refers to the financial part of the question—to the expenses. My noble friend on the cross benches has no confidence in our finance. He recalls the instance of the Abyssinian invasion, and

he says that there was an estimate of £3,000,000, and it turned out to be £9,000,000. My noble friend ought to be well informed on that subject, because it was at his instance and by his advice that we made war upon Abyssinia. I believe better advice was never given; a more necessary war was never made; but when that war took place it unfortunately occurred very late in the season, and the cabinet were of opinion and were informed by those who were competent to advise them in such matters, that the affair could not be finished in one campaign. But information reached the government which convinced them that by great exertions and expense it might be concluded in one campaign, and we did not hesitate to incur that expense, which amounted to a very large sum, and which was chiefly spent in obtaining means of transport. But it was through that expenditure that Lord Napier, in addition to his great qualities and skill, was enabled to conclude the Abyssinian war in one campaign. If you had had two campaigns, you would have spent, not £9,000,000, but more. In the second campaign you might have had a very bad season instead of the very fine season that we had; and you might, instead of savages, have found European officers who would have assisted them in resisting their enemy. But instead of that, Lord Napier conducted the one campaign to a successful issue without, I believe, the loss of a single life.

"Well, my lords, the question is, What is the course we ought to take at the present moment? I was in hopes, after the debate the other night, in which no one interfered with those members of your Lordships' House whose conduct was implicated in the various blue-books on the table, that we might have discussed the political character of the question much more fully than we have done, and that we should not be again lost in a series of what I must call wrangles about the conduct of ministers who are in office and who are out. If the noble viscount [Cardwell] who has just sat down is satisfied with the triumphant speech of the late viceroy of India [Lord Northbrook], as he describes it, I can only say that it is not a speech which will give to the people of England that knowledge which is desirable, and which they wish to have, of the great question at issue. If I am to sum up the three nights' debate which we virtually have had upon this matter, I should say it must be summed up in a sentence, so far as the discussions have gone. We have done something which in theory you approve, and which, if England had acted in time, you would have done yourselves. In a despatch of the noble viceroy who addressed us at such length this evening your lordships will find this statement. His government is alarmed by an account that the Russians are going to occupy Merv, and what is proposed is this: he proposes that we should make—I do not know that it was not to be an offensive and defensive alliance, but certainly a defensive alliance with Afghanistan, and that English officers should be immediately admitted to Herat. What is the difference"—

Lord Northbrook: "I never made any such proposal."

The Earl of Beaconsfield: "I am sorry that the noble lord is in the habit of contradicting without appealing to documents. I can give the date to the noble lord. He will find it in June, 1875. The despatch says, 'Much discussion has recently taken place as to the effect that would be produced by a Russian advance to Merv. We have before stated to Her Majesty's government our apprehension that the assumption by Russia of authority over the whole Turcoman country would create alarm in Afghanistan, and we think it desirable to express our opinion of the course which should be adopted if it should take place.' Here it is: 'It would then become necessary to give additional and more specific assurances to the ruler of Afghanistan that we are prepared to assist him to defend Afghanistan against attack from without.'

'*It would probably be desirable to enter into a treaty engagement with him,*' not merely an assurance, but 'a treaty engagement with him; and the establishment of a British resident in Herat would be the natural consequence of such an engagement and of the nearer approach of the Russian frontier.' I appeal to your lordships whether this quotation does not entirely substantiate any statement as to the policy of the noble earl, and whether my summary comparison between the policy of the late viceroy and our own is not correct. I have no objection at any time to be interrupted, and the only reason why I regret it now is that it will add to the few moments during which I shall have to trouble you.

"I received yesterday a communication from Lord Napier of Magdala, who could not arrrive in time to take part in this debate. He says, '*Afghanistan, if in the hands of a hostile power, may at any time deal a fatal blow to our empire. We cannot remain on the defensive without a ruinous drain on our resources. Our frontier is weak; an advanced position is necessary for our safety.*' When I am told that no military authority justifies Her Majesty's government, I can appeal with confidence to one who, I believe, must rank among the very highest military authorities. I will not detain your lordships, because it is impossible in your exhausted state, having met at an extraordinarily early hour to-day, to enter into any great discussion. What I want to impress on your lordships before you divide—which you will do in a very few minutes—is that you should not misapprehend the issue on which you have to decide. It is a very grave one. It is not a question of the Khyber Pass merely, and of some small cantonments at Dakka or at Jelalabad. It is a question which concerns the character of England in Europe. And your conduct to-day will animate this country and encourage Europe, if it be such as I would fain believe you are determined to accomplish.

"My lords, I object entirely to this amendment of the noble lord. It is an absurd position almost in which to put the House of Lords, to come down and appeal to them to stop the supplies to Her Majesty. If the amendment is substituted for our original motion, that would be the inevitable result. I cannot believe that many noble lords opposite, when they accurately understand the issue which is before them, can sanction such a course. They can scarcely have been conscious of the dangerous precipice to which the noble viscount, the mover of the amendment, was leading them. We have seen in this debate an indignant spirit, hostile to these tactics, evinced by some of the most eminent members of the party. The speech of the noble duke [the Duke of Somerset], which was hailed from both sides of the House, was one which expressed the sentiments which I am sure the great majority must feel. What I see in the amendment is not an assertion of great principles, which no man honours more than myself. What is at the bottom of it is rather that principle of peace at any price which a certain party in this country upholds. It is that dangerous dogma which I believe animates the ranks before me at this moment, although many of them may be unconscious of it. That deleterious doctrine haunts the people of this country in every form. Sometimes it is a committee; sometimes it is a letter; sometimes it is an amendment to the address; sometimes it is a proposition to stop the supplies. *That doctrine has done more mischief than any I can well recall that have been afloat in this century.* It has occasioned more wars than the most ruthless conquerors. It has disturbed and nearly destroyed that political equilibrium, so necessary to the liberties of nations and the welfare of the world. It has dimmed occasionally for a moment even the majesty of England. And, my lords, to-night you have an opportunity, which I trust you will not lose, of branding these opinions, these deleterious dogmas, with the reprobation of the peers of England."

The amendment of Lord Halifax was

defeated by a majority of 136. The verdict of the House of Commons was equally favourable. Mr. Whitbread, the Liberal member for Bedford, had moved, "That the House disapproves the conduct of Her Majesty's government, which has resulted in the war with Afghanistan." In spite of the denunciations of the leaders of the Liberal party—and those who appreciate coarse invective and distorted statements should read the speeches of Mr. Gladstone and Sir William Harcourt on that occasion —the vote of censure was defeated by a majority of 101.

Shortly before parliament separated to meet again in February, an event occurred which gave rise to much real sorrow, not only in England and in the little duchy where she was chief mistress and benefactress, but wherever her name was known and her actions remembered. Of all the members of the royal family, few were more honoured and respected by that large community who only know those around a throne by their public acts and by the rumour of court gossip, than the Princess Alice, who had quitted the people she loved, and by whom she was beloved, to become the consort of the Grand-Duke of Hesse-Darmstadt. Her winning grace of manner, the natural sweetness of her disposition, the tender regard for suffering which made her take a deep interest in all efforts to relieve pain and misery, her accomplishments, and the devotion she displayed to those near and dear to her, had all tended to make her one of those favourites which the English people love to take to their hearts, cherishing their deeds and reverencing their names. She had suddenly been called to her rest, having fallen a victim to diphtheria whilst nursing her little children, all of whom had suffered from the malady, and one of whom had perished beneath its fell infection.

"My lords," said the prime minister (December 17, 1878), in moving an address of condolence to the throne, "My lords, you are too well aware that a great calamity has fallen on the royal family of this realm. A princess, who loved us though she left us, and who always revisited her fatherland with delight—one of those women the brightness of whose being adorns society and inspires the circle in which she lives—has been removed from this world, to the anguish of her family, her friends, and her subjects. The Princess Alice—for I will venture to call her by that name, though she wore a crown—afforded one of the most striking instances that I can remember of richness of culture and rare intelligence, combined with the most pure and refined domestic sentiments. You, my lords, who knew her life well can recall those agonizing hours when she attended the dying bed of her illustrious father, who had directed her studies and formed her tastes. You can recall, too, the moment at which she attended her royal brother at a time when the hopes of England seemed to depend on his life; and now you can remember too well how, when the whole of her own family were stricken by a malignant disease, she had been to them the angel in the house till, her own vital power perhaps exhausted, she has herself fallen.

"My lords, there is something wonderfully piteous in the immediate cause of her death. The physicians who permitted her to watch over her suffering family enjoined her under no circumstances whatever to be tempted into an embrace. Her admirable self-restraint guarded her through the crises of this terrible complaint in safety. She remembered and observed the injunctions of her physicians. But it became her lot to break to her son, quite a youth, the death of his youngest sister, to whom he was devotedly attached. The boy was so overcome with misery that the agitated mother, to console him, clasped him in her arms—and thus received the kiss of death. My lords, I hardly know an incident more pathetic. It is one by which poets might be inspired, and in which the artist in every class, whether in picture, in statue, or in gem, might find a fitting subject for com-

memoration. My lords, we will not dwell at this moment on the sufferings of the husband whom she has left behind, and of the children who were so devoted to her; but our immediate duty is to offer our condolence to one whose happiness and whose sorrows always excite and command the loyalty and affectionate respect of this House. Upon Her Majesty a great grief has fallen, which none but the queen can so completely and acutely feel. Seventeen years ago Her Majesty experienced the crushing sorrow of her life, and then she was particularly sustained by the daughter whom she has now lost, who assisted her by her labours, and aided her by her presence and counsel. Her Majesty now feels that the cup of sorrow was not then exhausted. No language can express the consolation we wish to extend to our sovereign in her sorrow—such suffering is too fresh to allow of solace; but however exalted, there are none but must be sustained by the consciousness that they possess the sympathy of a nation."

Meanwhile the insolence of the Ameer of Afghanistan had been easily punished. No formidable resistance, after the victory of the Peiwar heights, was opposed to the advance of the English troops, and all active movements were for the moment suspended by the news of the flight of the Ameer from Cabul. In his despair Shere Ali, who, now that he was unsuccessful, was called "the madman" by his subjects, was anxious to cross the frontier and visit General Kauffman at Tashkent, and implore aid from Russia. He was not, however, permitted to enter the Russian lines; and his envoy was informed that the Czar declined to intervene in the affairs of Afghanistan. Thus foiled in his ambition, the once proud and insolent Ameer became a prey to the bitterest disappointment; and the iron so entered his soul that, shortly after this rebuff from General Kauffman, he pined away until death released him from all further misery. His son, Yakub Khan—who had for years been languishing in prison—was now called to reign in his stead. At first it was doubtful what course the new successor to the Afghan throne would take; but after a brief interval of suspense, Yakub Khan came of his own accord to the British camp at Gandamuk, and sued for peace.

After some consideration the following terms were agreed upon between Yakub Khan and Lord Lytton. Peace and friendship to subsist between the parties; the foreign affairs of the Ameer to be conducted under British advice; the Ameer to be supported by the British government against foreign aggression; a British resident, accompanied by a proper escort, to be appointed at Cabul, with power to depute British agents to the Afghan frontier on special occasions; all the Afghan territory in British occupation to be restored to the Ameer, except certain valleys, to remain as districts assigned to the British government; the British authorities to have complete control of the Khyber and Michni passes; and on the strict execution of the clauses of the treaty, the Ameer to be entitled to receive an annual subsidy of £60,000. The treaty of Gandamuk was signed, May 26, 1879. It was hoped that its provisions would strengthen the succession of Yakub Khan, and restore his authority over the turbulent tribesmen.

CHAPTER XVI.

AGRICULTURAL DEPRESSION.

The lines of the Conservative party had certainly not fallen in pleasant places. Ever since the accession of Lord Beaconsfield to power difficulty after difficulty, often the natural consequences of Liberal shortsightedness and mismanagement, had arisen. What with the Eastern question and the carrying out of the clauses of the Berlin treaty, Russian intrigue and the troubles in Afghanistan, the depression in the commercial world, and the grave condition of the agricultural interest with its consequent increase in the pauperism of the country, the hands of the government were fully occupied. Every department in the state was working overtime to keep pace with the current business which was daily extending itself in every direction, whilst the foreign office, the colonial office, the Indian office, the board of trade, and the local government board, seldom remembered under any administration having been pressed with correspondence more important and more incessant. On all sides the cabinet saw ample opportunities for the exercise of their supervision and their controlling influence. This was the time when discontent began to prevail, and pessimists of Liberal views went about moaning that we were paying too high a price for our policy of imperialism and had better substitute one of a less ambitious nature.

And now a fresh trouble sprang up. We had made war upon a fierce Zulu chieftain, and at first fortune had not favoured our arms. The original cause of the dispute was the jealousy between the Dutch Boers of the Transvaal and the tribes on their frontier as to rights of territory. The Boers laid a claim to certain lands as within their boundary, which was resisted by the native tribes. The quarrel developed into hostilities, and the Boers sustained reverses. As the aggressive character of the Boers tended greatly to irritate several of the native tribes, and especially the warlike Zulus, the British government thought it prudent to interfere and put a stop to such grasping policy. Accordingly Sir Theophilus Shepstone was sent into the Transvaal—the territory of the Boers—as special commissioner to investigate matters; and finding that the half-savage Dutch settlers were incapable either of checking their greed for annexing lands, or of holding their own against the natives whose temper they had aroused by their proceedings, he resolved to cut short all negotiations by taking possession of the Transvaal. As we had annexed the Punjaub and Oude in order to put down the prevalent anarchy and to keep the frontier of our Indian empire from peril, so, in order not to endanger our possessions in South Africa, it was necessary to annex the Transvaal.

"It was patent to every observer," writes Sir T. Shepstone, "that the government [of the Transvaal] was powerless to control either its white citizens or its native subjects; that it was incapable of enforcing its laws, or of collecting its taxes; that the treasury was empty; that the salaries of officials had been and are months in arrear; that sums payable for the ordinary and necessary expenditure of government cannot be had, and that such services as postal contracts were long and hopelessly overdue; that the white inhabitants had become split into factions; that the large native populations within the boundaries of the state ignore its authority and laws; and that the powerful Zulu king, Cetchwayo

is anxious to seize upon the first opportunity of attacking a country, the conduct of whose warriors has convinced him that it can be easily conquered by his clamouring regiments." He again writes, "I think it necessary to explain, more at length than I was able to do in my last despatch, the circumstances which seem to me to forbid all hope that the Transvaal Republic is capable of maintaining the show even of independent existence any longer, which induced me to consider it my duty to assume this position in my communications with the president and Executive Council, and which have convinced me that if I were to leave the country in its present condition, I should but expose the inhabitants to anarchy among themselves and to attack from the natives, that would prove not only fatal to the republic, but in the highest degree dangerous to Her Majesty's possessions and subjects in South Africa."

This arrangement as to annexation, however, did not please the bloodthirsty Cetchwayo. He was irritated with the Boers because they had refused to acknowledge his suzerainty over them, and he was still less pleased with their being placed under the protection of the white man; he was jealous that the honour of defeating the Boers in the recent encounters should have fallen to another; and above all he desired an occasion for his young warriors "to wash their spears" in the blood of his enemies—a gratification which had not been afforded them since his accession. The Natal government begged him to be quiet, and to keep the peace with his neighbours. At first Cetchwayo was sullenly submissive; but when the government of Natal proceeded to remonstrate with him for having put several young women to death for refusing to marry his soldiers, and at the same time complained that in having so acted the Zulu king had not carried out the advice given him by Sir Theophilus Shepstone, then all that was savage in the fierce chieftain broke loose. "Did I ever tell Mr. Shepstone," he cried, "that I would not kill? Did Mr. Shepstone tell the white people I made such an arrangement? Because if he did, he has deceived them. I do kill; but do not consider that I have done anything yet in the way of killing. Why do the white people start at nothing? I have not yet begun; I have yet to kill; it is the custom of our nation, and I will not depart from it. Why does the governor of Natal speak to me about my laws? Do I go to Natal and speak to him about his laws? I shall not agree to any laws or rules from Natal, and by so doing throw the large kraal which I govern into the water. My people will not listen unless they are killed; and while wishing to be friends with the English, I do not agree to give my people over to be governed by laws sent to me by them. Have I not asked the English to allow me to wash my spears since the death of my father Umpandi; and they have kept playing with me all this time, treating me as a child? Go back and tell the English that I shall now act on my own account, and if they wish me to agree to their laws, I shall leave and become a wanderer; but before I go, it will be seen as I shall not go without having acted. Go back and tell the white men this, and let them hear it well. The governor of Natal and I are equal; he is governor at Natal, and I am governor here."

Such a ruffian close upon our border, and with 40,000 brave and well-disciplined troops eager for warfare, could not fail to be a source of incessant danger to the colony of Natal. At any moment it was feared that Cetchwayo might let loose his young warriors to "wash their spears" in the gore of English colonists. To remove the anxiety the presence of the savage chieftain occasioned, two different proposals were now suggested. According to Sir Henry Bulwer, the governor of Natal, the proper course to adopt was to allay the fears of the Zulu king as to the intentions of the British government, and to satisfy all his reasonable demands. The annexation of the

Transvaal had caused Cetchwayo to be alarmed lest his own territory should follow the same fate; let him therefore be assured, said Sir Henry, that his kingdom shall not be taken from him. For years there had been disputes between the Zulus and the Boers as to certain border lands, and the Zulus had considered themselves aggrieved in the matter; let a commission, suggested the governor of Natal, investigate the rival claims and settle the question by arbitration. The safety of his kingdom assured him, and the boundary dispute decided by impartial evidence, Cetchwayo would be satisfied, and all fears as to the future movements of the Zulus be set at rest. So argued the governor of Natal.

There was, however, an opposite opinion expressed. The queen's high commissioner in South Africa was Sir Bartle Frere, a man who had seen much distinguished service in India, whose abilities were of the highest order, whose experience had been vast, and in whose sound judgment the most implicit confidence was placed. Now Sir Bartle differed entirely from the governor of Natal. He considered, and on this point the feeling of the colony was with him, that there could be no security for South Africa so long as the military organization of the Zulus was permitted to remain as a standing menace on the borders of Natal. Sir Bartle was therefore in favour of compelling Cetchwayo to reduce his forces; and it was only after pressing despatches from Sir Henry Bulwer, that he had agreed to adopt the more pacific alternative. The question of the boundaries had then been carefully gone into, the commissioners deciding almost unanimously against the claims of the Boers. It had been adjudged that no cession of territory had been made by the Zulu chieftains to the Boers, and that even if such cession had been agreed upon it would have been "null and void unless confirmed by the voice of the nation according to the custom of the Zulus." Still, as the Boers had held certain lands—to the west of the Blood River—which had been unchallenged by the Zulus, the commissioners confirmed the Dutch settlers in their occupation of the same.

This decision was laid before Sir Bartle Frere, who in ratifying it added certain clauses of his own which he demanded the Zulu chieftain to carry out. First, Cetchwayo was to act according to the guarantees he had given, and not permit indiscriminate shedding of blood within his territory. Second, he was to abolish his present military system, and substitute for it a system of tribal quotas. Third, he was to accept the presence and advice of a British resident. Fourth, he was to protect the missionaries and their converts. Lastly, certain criminals were to be surrendered and certain fines paid. A period of thirty days was granted to the Zulu king to consider these demands; at the expiration of that time of grace, should the answer be a refusal, war would ensue.

War ensued. Cetchwayo declined to comply with the terms laid before him; and Lord Chelmsford, as commander-in-chief of the forces of South Africa, crossed the frontier and invaded Zululand. We know what followed—the terrible disaster at Isandhlwana, the gallant defence of Rorke's Drift, the despatch of reinforcements from home, and the sharp strictures passed upon the tactics of the commander-in-chief. These are but the events of yesterday, and need not be dilated upon.

Parliament met, February 13, 1879, two days after the arrival of the news of Isandhlwana. The subject of the Zulu war naturally engrossed all thoughts. Numerous questions were put as to the strength of the reinforcements about to be sent out, as to the necessity of the war, as to the blunders of Lord Chelmsford, and as to the high-handed action of Sir Bartle Frere; still it was some weeks before the campaign became the subject of a pitched debate. Meanwhile the government, whilst declining to withdraw their confidence from the lord high commissioner, passed upon him a most severe censure for

his hasty and independent proceedings. Ministers were unable, wrote the secretary for the colonies (March 19, 1879) to Sir Bartle Frere, to find in the documents placed before them "that evidence of urgent necessity for immediate action which alone could justify him in taking, without their full knowledge and sanction, a course almost certain to result in a war." Still the government had a high appreciation of his great experience, ability, and energy, and "had no desire to withdraw in the present crisis of affairs the confidence hitherto reposed in him, the continuance of which was now more than ever needed to conduct our difficulties in South Africa to a successful termination." Sir Bartle was, however, strongly warned not to take any decided steps in the future, nor to commit himself to any positive conclusions, until he had received instructions from home.

The day for the discussion of South African affairs had now arrived. In the Upper House Lord Lansdowne moved (March 25, 1879), "That this House, while willing to support Her Majesty's government in all necessary measures for defending the possessions of Her Majesty in South Africa, regrets that the *ultimatum*, which was calculated to produce immediate war, should have been presented to the Zulu king without authority from the responsible advisers of the crown, and that an offensive war should have been commenced without imperative and pressing necessity or adequate preparation; and the House regrets that, after the censure passed upon the high commissioner by Her Majesty's government in the despatch of March 19, 1879, the conduct of affairs in South Africa should be retained in his hands."

A keen debate ensued. The Opposition asserted that Sir Bartle Frere ought to be recalled, as the license he had permitted himself to exercise would have a most pernicious effect upon other distant representatives of the crown; the war would never have occurred, they also said, had it not been for Lord Carnarvon's impatience for South African confederation, and for his "incurable greed for extending the limits of the colonies," whilst they declared that the annexation of the Transvaal was a mistake, unless the government were prepared to send out a larger military force to South Africa. On the other hand, the government combated these complaints. They denied that they had even censured Sir Bartle Frere; they had passed no opinion on his policy, but had simply asserted the principle that "Her Majesty's advisers, and they only, must decide the grave issues of peace and war." War with Cetchwayo was sooner or later inevitable, and the lord high commissioner had thought it best not to delay in the matter. It was true ministers had not entirely approved of his conduct; still his hasty proceedings were not sufficient to outweigh the many considerations which they felt required the continuance of his services in South Africa. Every one knew it was unwise to change horses when crossing a stream.

Toward the close of the debate, Lord Beaconsfield addressed the House. "I generally find," he said "there is one advantage at the end of a debate, besides the relief which is afforded by its termination, and that is that both sides of the House seem pretty well agreed as to the particular point that really is at issue; but the rich humour of the noble duke [Duke of Somerset] has again diverted us from the consideration of the motion really before the House. If the noble duke and his friends were desirous of knowing what was the policy which Her Majesty's government were prepared generally to pursue in South Africa, if they were prepared to challenge the policy of Sir Bartle Frere in all its details, I should have thought they would have produced a very different motion from that which is now lying on your lordships' table; for that is a motion of a most limited character, and, according to the strict rules of parliamentary discussion, precludes you from most of the subjects which have lately

been introduced to our consideration, and which principally have emanated from noble lords opposite. We have not been summoned here to-day to consider the policy of the acquisition of the Transvaal. These are subjects on which I am sure the government would be prepared to address your lordships, if their conduct were clearly and fairly impugned. And with regard to the annexation of the province, which has certainly very much filled the mouths of men of late, I can easily conceive that that would have been a subject for fair discussion in this House, and we should have heard, as we have heard to-night, though in a manner somewhat unexpected from the nature of the resolution before us, from the noble lord who was recently the secretary of state for the colonies, the principal reasons which induced the government to sanction that policy — a policy which I believe can be defended, but which has not been impugned to-night in any formal manner.

"What has been impugned to-night is the conduct of the government in sanctioning, not the policy of Sir Bartle Frere, but his taking a most important step without consulting them, which on such subjects is the usual practice with all governments. But the noble lord opposite who introduced the subject does not even impugn the policy of the lord high commissioner; and it was left for the noble duke who has just addressed us, and who ought to have brought forward this question if his views are so strongly entertained by him on the matter, not in supporting a resolution such as now lies on your lordships' table, but one which would have involved a discussion of the policy of the government and that of the high officer who is particularly interested in it.

"My noble friend, the noble marquis [Lord Salisbury] who very recently addressed the House, touched the real question which is before us, and it is a very important question, although it is not of the expansive character of the one which would have been justified by the comments of noble lords opposite. What we have to decide to-night is this—whether Her Majesty's government shall have the power of recommending to the sovereign the employment of a high officer to fulfil duties of the utmost importance, or whether that exercise of the prerogative on their advice shall be successfully impugned and that appointment superseded by noble lords opposite. That course is perfectly constitutional, if they are prepared to take the consequences. But let it be understood what the issue is. It is this, — that a censure upon the government is called for, because they have selected the individual who, on the whole, they think is the best qualified successfully to fulfil the duties of high commissioner. The noble lords opposite make that proposition, and if they succeed they will succeed in that which has hitherto been considered one of the most difficult tasks of the executive government—that is to say, they will supersede the individual whom the sovereign, in the exercise of her prerogative under the advice of her ministers, has selected for an important post. I cannot agree in the general remark made by the noble duke, that because an individual has committed an error, and even a considerable error, for that reason, without any reference either to his past services or his present qualifications, immediately a change should be recommended and he should be recalled from the scene of his duties.

"I remember myself a case not altogether different from the present one," continued Lord Beaconsfield, alluding to Sir James Hudson, who when minister at Turin had been charged with having expressed himself unguardedly upon the subject of Italian nationality. "It happened some years ago when I sat in the other House. Then a very high official—a diplomatist of great eminence, a member of the Liberal party—had committed what was deemed a great indiscretion by several members of his own party; and the government were asked in a formal manner by a Liberal member whether

that distinguished diplomatist had been in consequence recalled. But the person who was then responsible for the conduct of public affairs in that House—the humble individual who is now addressing your lordships—made this answer with the full concurrence of his colleagues—denied that that distinguished diplomatist was recalled, and said that *great services are not cancelled by one act or one single error, however it may be regretted at the moment.* That is what I said then with regard to Sir James Hudson, and what I say now with regard to Sir Bartle Frere. But I do not wish to rest on that. I confess that, so keen is my sense of responsibility and that of my colleagues, and I am sure also that of noble lords opposite, that we would not allow our decisions in such matters to be unduly influenced by personal considerations of any kind. What we had to determine is this, Was it wise that such an act on the part of Sir Bartle Frere as, in fact, commencing war without consulting the government at home and without their sanction, should be passed unnoticed? Ought it not to be noticed in a manner which should convey to that eminent person a clear conviction of the feelings of Her Majesty's government; and at the same time was it not their duty to consider, were he superseded, whether they could place in his position an individual equally qualified to fulfil the great duties and responsibility resting on him? That is what we had to consider. We considered it entirely with reference to the public interest, and the public interest alone; and we arrived at a conviction that on the whole the retention of Sir Bartle Frere in that position was our duty, notwithstanding the inconvenient observations and criticisms to which we were, of course, conscious it might subject us. And, that being our conviction, we have acted upon it.

"It is a very easy thing for a government to make a scapegoat; but that is conduct which I hope no gentleman on this side, and I believe no gentleman sitting opposite, would easily adopt. If Sir Bartle Frere had been recalled—if he had been recalled in deference to the panic, the thoughtless panic of the hour, in deference to those who have no responsibility in the matter, and who have not weighed well and deeply investigated all the circumstances and all the arguments which can be brought forward, and which must be appealed to to influence our opinions on such questions—no doubt a certain degree of odium might have been diverted from the heads of Her Majesty's ministers, and the world would have been delighted, as it always is, to find a victim. That was not the course which we pursued, and it is one which I trust no British government ever will pursue. We had but one object in view, and that was to take care that at this most critical period the affairs of Her Majesty in South Africa should be directed by one not only qualified to direct them, but who was superior to any other individual whom we could have selected for that purpose. The sole question that we really have to decide to-night is—Was it the duty of Her Majesty's government to recall Sir Bartle Frere in consequence of his having declared war without our consent? We did not think it our duty to take that course, and we do not think it our duty to take that course now. Whether we are right in the determination at which we have arrived is the sole question which the House has to determine upon the motion before it.

"The noble duke opposite [the Duke of Somerset] has told us, that he should not be contented without being made acquainted with the whole policy which Her Majesty's government are prepared to pursue in South Africa. If the noble duke will introduce that subject, we shall be happy to discuss it with him. No one could introduce it in a more interesting and, indeed, in a more entertaining manner than the noble duke, who possesses that sarcastic faculty that so well qualifies him to express his opinion on such a matter. I think, however, that we ought to have had rather longer notice before we were called upon to discuss so

large a theme which has now been brought suddenly before us. If the noble marquis who introduced this subject had given us notice of a motion of this character, we should not have hesitated for a moment to meet it. I have, however, no desire to avoid discussing the subject of our future policy in South Africa, even on so general a notice as we have in reference to it from the noble duke. Sir Bartle Frere was selected by the noble lord [Lord Carnarvon], who formerly occupied the position of secretary to the colonies, chiefly to secure one great end—namely, to carry out that policy of confederation in South Africa which the noble lord had successfully carried out on a previous occasion with regard to the North American colonies.

"If there is any policy which, in my mind, is opposed to the policy of annexation it is that of confederation. By pursuing the policy of confederation we bind states together, we consolidate their resources, and we enable them to establish a strong frontier; and where we have a strong frontier, that is the best security against annexation. I myself regard a policy of annexation with great distrust. I believe that the reasons of state which induced us to annex the Transvaal were not, on the whole, perfectly sound. But what were the circumstances under which that annexation was effected? The Transvaal was a territory which was no longer defended by its occupiers. The noble lord opposite [Lord Kimberley], who formerly had the colonies under his management, spoke of the conduct of Sir Theophilus Shepstone as though he had not taken due precautions to effect the annexation of that province, and said that he was not justified in concealing that he had not successfully consummated his object. The noble lord said he had not assembled troops enough in the province to carry out properly the policy of annexation. But Sir Theophilus Shepstone particularly refers to the very fact to show, that so unanimous and so united was the sentiment in the province in favour of annexation, that it was unnecessary to send any large force there to bring it about. *The annexation of that province was a necessity—a geographical necessity.*

"But the annexation of the Transvaal was one of the reasons why those who were connected with that province might have calculated upon the permanent existence of Zululand as an independent state. I know it is said that when we are at war, as we unfortunately now are, with the Zulus or any other savage nation, even though we inflicted upon them some great disaster and might effect an arrangement with them of a peaceable character, before long the same power would again attack us unless we annexed the territory. I have never considered that a legitimate argument in favour of annexation of a barbarous country. It is very true that if we defeated the Zulus to-morrow, as I trust that we shall shortly in a very significant manner, in a few years another war may break out between ourselves and them. But similar results might occur in Europe if we went to war with one of our neighbours, as we unfortunately have done on previous occasions; and even if we defeated our neighbours, when their resources were revived, when their population increased, and when they had improved their arms of precision, it would be very likely that they might seize a favourable opportunity to go to war with us again. But is that an argument why we should not hold our hand until we have completely crushed our adversary, and is that any reason why we should pursue a policy of extermination with regard to a barbarous nation with whom we happen to be at war? That is a policy which I hope will never be sanctioned by this House.

"It is, of course, possible that we may again be involved in war with the Zulus; but it is an equal chance that, in the development of circumstances in that part of the world, the Zulu people may have to invoke the aid and the alliance of England against some other people, and that the

policy dictated by feelings and influences which have regulated our conduct with regard to European states, may be successfully pursued with regard to less civilized nations in a different part of the world. This is the policy of Her Majesty's government, and therefore they cannot be in favour of a policy of annexation, because it is directly opposed to it. I will not enter into any minute discussion of the various questions which, by means of their association with the main question, have been imported into the debate, They have really nothing to do with the single issue that is now before your lordships, and upon which in a very short time you will record your opinion. It is not the policy of England with regard to South Africa now for some years past that is called in question. Different cabinets and different schools of political opinion are equally interested in maintaining that policy. It is not, in fact, the annexation of the Transvaal province upon which you are now called to decide. It is not, in fact, any of the matters that have been treated in detail to-night, but which really do not branch out of the resolution which is on the table, and to which, if their correctness is questioned, the noble lord will have a legitimate opportunity of calling your lordships' attention.

"The question we have before us now is, Whether Her Majesty's ministers have acted with policy in retaining the services of Sir Bartle Frere in the circumstances in which they have been retained? On the part of the government, I give my opinion here publicly that in taking that course we took one for the public welfare; that we were influenced by no personal considerations; that we were influenced by none of those feelings which it is difficult for even honourable men when they find a distinguished public officer in difficulty or disgrace to be free from; that we divested ourselves from any other sentiment but doing that which, in a most difficult state of affairs, was for the public advantage. And if you wish the public advantage to be first considered, and not the triumph of a party, you will to-night give your decided negative to the motion of the noble marquis."

The resolution was rejected by a large majority—non-contents, 156; contents, 61. A similar fate befell the same resolution when brought forward two days afterwards in the House of Commons by Sir Charles Dilke. It was negatived by a majority of 60—ayes, 246; noes, 306.

Lord Beaconsfield spoke but this once upon the operations of the Zulu campaign He said a few words, it is true, on the Isandhlwana affair, which he criticised as "a disaster, and not a defeat;" he passed a brief but graceful tribute upon the young prince whose promising life was so cravenly sacrificed by his escort, to the eternal infamy of the officer in charge; he made a few remarks as to the despatch of reinforcements; but with regard to all the more important details touching the progress of the war, the prime minister was content to leave matters entirely in the hands of those colleagues whose province it was to superintend the control of affairs in South Africa. Happily the campaign was not of long duration. The battle of Ulundi was to the fierce Cetchwayo what the fall of Magdala had been to the savage potentate of Abyssinia, and the burning of Coomassie to the Ashantee despot. By this victory Lord Chelmsford retrieved his reputation as a general; the king of the Zulus was taken prisoner and his power crushed; our troops were then sent home; and banquets, congratulatory addresses, and "swords of honour" became the order of the day—thus proving that another "little war" was over, and had been brought to a conclusion to the satisfaction of Englishmen.

The question, however, which was now keenly agitating the country, to the exclusion of all subjects connected with our foreign policy, was the serious condition of the landed interest. Bad harvest after bad harvest, and the enormous importation of corn and cattle from abroad, had caused

the farmers to experience a distress which they had not suffered for the last thirty years. All over the country farms were advertised to be let, or as vacant; tenants were unable to pay their rents; and the squirearchy, what with large holdings on their hands and reductions of rents, felt themselves compelled to practise a severe economy in order to escape embarrassment. And now the old and familiar cry of "protection" began to be raised, and the state was implored to step in and interfere. All the former arguments as to the advantage to be derived from free trade when adopted by all nations, and the disadvantages such a system gave rise to when a country had abolished its protective tariff before other nations had done the same, were freely advanced. Reciprocity, fair trade, or protection pure and simple, was loudly demanded by the anxious and impoverished landed interest. But, as Lord Beaconsfield said, the appeal had come too late; it was useless to ask for protection when there was nothing to protect; useless to beg for reciprocity when we had no items on our tariff wherewith to reciprocate. We were in the position of a man who had given away everything, and therefore had nothing to exchange.

The question, however, came before the Upper House, where the landlord interest was naturally very strong. Towards the end of March, the Marquis of Huntly rose to call the attention of the Peers to the depressed condition of agriculture, and to ask the government if they intended to appoint a royal commission to inquire into the causes leading to such depression. The speaker drew a piteous picture of the state of the country. Landlords, he said, were returning from 10 to 25 per cent. of their rents to their tenants; whilst farmers, unable to contend against the importation of corn at low freights from America, of cattle from Canada, and dead meat from the United States, were busy resigning their holdings and offering their services to the emigration agents. Lord Huntly then complained of the heavy and unjust taxation the land was called upon to bear for the support of the poor. The taxes, he said, paid by an owner of land amounted to 16½ per cent. on his income; by an occupier of land, 12¼; by an owner of house property, 14½; by an owner of mineral and railway property, 13½; and by an owner of personal property, 8¾ on his income. Those calculations had never been refuted. In most of our rural parishes, he continued, rates had risen so steadily that they had quadrupled during the last twenty years. The importation of food had also greatly increased within the last twenty years. In 1858 the imports reached £25,000,000; in 1868, £55,000,000; and in 1878, £99,000,000; the ratio for the population per head being in 1858, 18*s.* 3*d.*; in 1868, £1 16*s.* 2*d.*; and in 1878, £2 19*s.* 7*d.* Some measure, he concluded, should be introduced by the state to relieve the land from such partial and unjust taxation.

To this inquiry and to this appeal the prime minister at once responded. The attendance of the Peers was, however, very scanty. "My lords," said Lord Beaconsfield (March 28, 1879), "although the appearance of this House to-night is not one which shows that interest in the subject which the noble marquis probably anticipated, that is not, I am sure, occasioned by any want of sympathy with the suffering classes of this country. Myself, I should have been quite prepared to leave the matter in the hands of those noble lords who have dealt with it, had not a direct appeal been made to the government by the noble marquis; but I feel I should be wanting, not only in my duty, but in courtesy to the noble marquis, if I allowed that appeal to pass unnoticed. The noble marquis has called our attention to the depressed state of agriculture and of commerce and trade in this country; but he has not offered us any information in detail upon any head of his motion—or rather of his inquiry—except with regard to agriculture. I am sure the noble

marquis will pardon me if I venture to observe, that I think his treatment of that subject was not characterized by novelty, or by that adequate acquaintance with the proceedings which have occurred in both Houses of Parliament upon the subject upon which he chiefly dilated—namely, the peculiar burdens upon real property —which might have been expected. The noble marquis seems to have founded his inquiry to-night in a great degree upon some speeches which I myself made—made in 'another place,' and in another generation. Then I thought it my duty to open a subject which had been very seldom entered into; and at a time when the agricultural interest of this country was deeply suffering, and was by no means hopeful as to the future, I endeavoured to show that some relief might be obtained by a more equitable adjustment of the public burdens. It was impossible to deny the justice of the principle upon which those motions were made. Indeed, although I was then, as the noble marquis has reminded us to-night, the leader of the Opposition in another House of Parliament, on every occasion on which I brought that subject before the consideration of the House of Commons, my motions were supported by numbers which almost equalled the majorities which, for the moment, defeated them.

"Many of your lordships will remember that, though the justice of the plea is undeniable, still at no time was the relief contemplated of a character or amount adequate to meet a state of affairs like the present, and to be a competent remedy for the evils to which the noble marquis has called attention to-night. The noble marquis should remember that the answer to my appeal to parliament at that time made by those who resisted, not the justice, but the adequacy of the remedy I proposed, was that if a readjustment of local burdens did take place, the relief of the land, which then only was suffering, could not be measured by the amount of local taxation. It was shown at the time by the chancellor of the exchequer that, taking the sum of £85,000,000 a year as the amount of rental upon which rates were charged thirty years ago, the amount on which landed interest was assessed was only £40,000,000. But the noble marquis should be, and no doubt is aware, that during those thirty years two things have happened. In the first place, that there has been *considerable relief afforded to the real property of the country, of which land forms a large portion; and secondly, that the proportion of rates, in so far as they fall upon land, is much reduced, so as to be levied now on no more than one-third of the real property of the country.* If these are facts—and they are founded on official returns—I cannot for a moment bring myself to believe that some small readjustment of our local taxation can bring such relief to the land as will reanimate it under the unexampled depression it now endures. Then the noble marquis omitted to remember that there has been, in fact, *a considerable amount of local taxation remitted from real property* during the period from which he originated his speech; and he also should have recollected the circumstances in which that reduction was made. The adjustment of our local taxation ceased to be a party question in the House of Commons. The gentleman who of late brought it forward was a county member [Sir Massey Lopes], and his political connection was with the party that was then in Opposition, and of which I was the representative and the leader. But it was not a party motion, and he carried it by a majority of 100, because it was acknowledged on both sides of the House not to be a party motion, and because those who peculiarly represented the house population of the towns perceived that they would themselves have the lion's share and principal benefit of any considerable remission of local taxation. All this must be known to the noble marquis, and I am surprised that he did not hesitate before he recommended a

remedy for agricultural distress which, on reflection, he must perceive to be utterly inadequate to give the relief which is required. No one, I think, can deny that the depression of the agricultural interest is excessive. Though I can recall several periods of suffering, none of them have ever equalled the present in its intenseness. Let us consider what may be the principal causes of this distress.

"My noble friend who has addressed you [Lord Norton] has very properly touched upon the effect of the continuous bad harvests in this country. If we are to accept the figures of the highest authority upon agricultural subjects and statistics, the loss on a bad harvest, such as we had in the year 1875, was no less than £26,000,000 sterling. It is, however, true that at that time the loss and suffering were not experienced or recognized as they were in the old days when the system of protection existed, because the price of the food of the people was not immediately affected by a bad harvest; and it was not till the repetition of the misfortune, by two bad harvests in further succession, that the diminution of the wealth of the country began to be severely felt by the people generally—not by the agriculturists only, but by those who were interested in trade and commerce generally. The remarkable feature of the present agricultural depression is this, that the agricultural interest is suffering from *a succession of bad harvests, and that these bad harvests are accompanied for the first time by exceedingly low prices.* That is a remarkable circumstance which has never before occurred, a circumstance which has never before been encountered. In old days, when we had a bad harvest, we had also the somewhat dismal compensation of *higher prices.* That is not the condition of the present; on the contrary, the harvests are bad, and the prices are lower. That is a new feature that requires consideration. There can be no doubt that the diminution of the public wealth by the amount of £80,000,000, suffered by one class, begins to affect the general wealth of the country, and is one of the sources of the depression, not only of agriculture, but also of commerce and trade. No candid mind could deny that this is one of the reasons for that depression. Nor is it open to doubt that foreign competition has exercised a most injurious influence on the agricultural interests of the country. The country, however, was perfectly warned that if we made a great revolution in our industrial system, and put an end to the policy of protection, such would be one of the consequences which would accrue. I may mention that the great result of the returns we possess is this, that the immense importations of foreign agricultural produce have been *vastly in excess of what the increased demands of our population actually require.* And that is why such low prices are maintained.

"I have here the average import of wheat in the years 1867 and 1868 and in the years 1877 and 1878. Stated in quarters, the quantity was 8,000,000 quarters in 1867 and 1868, and 13,848,000 quarters in 1877 and 1878. Now, 3,000,000 quarters would have been quite sufficient to meet the wants of our increased population; but the actual increase of 5,000,000 quarters is equal to the supply of more than one-sixth of our whole population, or nearly twice what was required by its actual increase. That is to a great degree a cause of this depression. You have, then, in the first place, continuous bad harvests, which would in any case bring depression, not on the agricultural interest only, but, by the diminution of the public wealth, on trade and commerce generally; and secondly, you have, as far as the agricultural interest is concerned, this greatly increased competition from abroad. I think there is another cause, but as it is not peculiar to agriculture, I will leave it, while I make one or two observations on a subject very slightly treated by the noble marquis, and not so fully as I could have desired by my noble

friend who has addressed us. It has been assumed throughout this debate that there has been on the part of the trade and commerce of the country a depression, not only equal to that which the agricultural interest is labouring under, but that that depression was identical and similar in its effects and causes to those by which agricultural distress has been produced. Now, so far as I can form an opinion from the documents I have seen, the case is the reverse. That there is immense depression in trade and commerce no one can deny; but instead of the depression of trade and commerce resembling at this moment that of agriculture, it is quite the contrary. Agriculture just now is producing much less than it did before—nearly 1,000,000 acres have gone out of cereal cultivation—and it is suffering from foreign competition, which even in its own home market it has unsuccessfully to encounter. That, however, is not the condition of our foreign trade. The volume of our foreign trade is not at all diminished.

"It is perfectly untrue, so far as I can form an opinion on the subject, that we have lost the markets of the world, or that any branch of foreign industry—generally speaking, of course—is successfully competing with the English. That there may be occasionally, in the multifarious transactions of English commerce, some particular article that may find itself for a moment shut out from the markets, or that, owing to a combination of circumstances, it might meet with a successful and unexpected competitor, is one of the necessary consequences of that multifariousness. The great fact nevertheless remains, that after a period of continued depression the volume of production has been exactly the same. There has been of course less profit; but the volume of industry has been the same; the same quantity of goods has been manufactured; there are no markets from which we have been successfully shut out, and no competitors with whom we cannot satisfactorily enter into rivalry. Here is a return which I think proves the case—it is a return of British and Irish exports. I find that the exports in 1873 were, in round numbers, £255,000,000; while in 1877 they were only £198,000,000—showing an apparent falling off of £57,000,000. But if you value the products of 1877, which only produced £198,000.000, at the same rate as the products of 1873, which were valued at £255,000,000, you will find that the difference between them is less than £1,000,000. It is, therefore, clear that, although the depression of trade and commerce is undeniable, that depression does not arise, as in the case of the agricultural distress, from the loss of the power of production, or from severe and successful competition with foreign industry. On the contrary, during all these years of depression we have been producing an equal quantity of goods; the same volume of English manufacture has been sent into the world, only we have been obtaining for them lower and still lower prices. That, it appears to me, is an important circumstance, and one which demands our deep consideration.

"I doubt not the depression in our home trade is affected very much, as I freely admitted at the first, by bad harvests, totally irrespective of the principle on which our industrial system may be established, whether it be a protective one or one of free imports. It is clear that a series of bad harvests greatly diminishes the sum of national wealth, and must materially, in any circumstances, interfere with the trade of the country. It is quite possible, as we have known from our own experience, that one bad harvest, which years ago would have created discontent and great suffering recognized by every class, might be passed over in the circumstances in which we now find ourselves. But if you cannot pass over two, you certainly cannot pass over three or four; for, although the last harvest was not bad, it was garnered under such circumstances that, so far as the farmer was concerned, it was a bad harvest. I have said I admitted that the causes of agricultural depression

were principally these—In the first place, the bad harvests; in the second place, foreign competition, which the country adopted, not with haste or in rashness—which it had an opportunity of rejecting, because a considerable party in parliament gave it that opportunity, and on the merits of which, after it was established, the country was appealed to and a parliament elected on the issue placed before it, and yet which it did not choose to change. The second cause, I say, is to be found in this competition which you have, not precipitately, but determinedly adopted; and there is besides another cause, which is, in my mind, not peculiar to agricultural distress, but which is equally applicable to commercial distress: and that is the effect which the production of gold has exercised, and is at this moment particularly exercising, not only on commercial transactions, but on the value of the other precious metals.

"I do not know that I can put the matter more clearly before your lordships than in this way. After the repeal of the corn laws there was considerable suffering among all classes. Not merely in the agricultural classes, but in trade generally, there was great discontent and dissatisfaction. I do not myself believe it was the immediate effect of the repeal of the corn laws: it was probably a reaction after the great stimulus, no doubt, which had been created in consequence of the extraordinary expenditure on the railway system in England. Be that as it may, very great discontent existed. Suddenly, after three or four years, there was an extraordinary revival in trade and a great elevation in prices. How did that occur? One of the most wonderful events in the history of the world happened, and that was the discovery of gold in California. In 1852 £36,000,000 of gold were poured into Europe; and when your lordships recollect that the business of the world until that time had been carried on by an amount of gold which, I believe, never reached £6,000,000 a year, you can at once apprehend the effect of this discovery. In one year there came £36,000,000 of gold, and in five years £150,000,000 were poured into Europe. The effect of this was that prices were raised immensely. But a marvellous thing occurred shortly after. There was a commission of all the great states of Europe, who took advantage of the holding of the Exhibition at Paris to meet there, with the consent of their governments, to consider whether a uniform system of coinage could not be established in the world; and they came to a resolution that a uniform system could be established, and that advantage ought to be taken of the gold discoveries to bring about this result.

"Whatever may have been the exact circumstances of the case, which was in the result such as I have indicated, the government of Germany, which had £80,000,000 of silver, availed themselves of the great change of which I am speaking, to substitute gold for their £80,000,000 of silver. France resolved that her bi-metallic currency should, if possible, be replaced by entirely a gold currency, and the example of those two countries was followed by Holland and the smaller states of Europe; and the great process of converting silver into gold currency continued. These vast changes have been going on for ten years; and we cannot, therefore, be surprised at the revolution which has occurred in the price of silver, when both France and Germany, the one with £60,000,000 and the other with £80,000,000 of silver, were anxious to avail themselves of the change which has occurred, and to substitute a gold currency. All this time the produce in the gold mines in Australia and California has been regularly diminishing; and the consequence is that, while these large alterations of currency in favour of a gold currency have been taking place in the leading countries of Europe—notwithstanding an increase of population, which alone requires always a considerable increase of gold currency to carry on its transactions—the amount every year has diminished and

is diminishing, until a state of affairs has been brought about by the gold discoveries, exactly the reverse of those they produced at first. Gold is every day appreciating in value, and as it appreciates in value, the lower become prices. This, then, I think, is the third cause—not dogmatically stated, but only with the diffidence which becomes one who has to speak on an abstruse and complicated subject—which, I think, earnestly requires the consideration of your lordships, and which may lead to consequences which may be of a very serious character.

"Now, my lords, I do not wish to speak at too much length on this subject. I have noticed, on the part of the government, a series of causes which, I think, have led to the present most unsatisfactory state of the public fortunes. The greatest sufferers at this moment, undoubtedly, are the cultivators of the soil and the farming class. They are a class who, if you look to the amount of labour they employ, if you look to their general character, their connection with local interests, and a variety of other considerations, must ever be deeply valued by those who value the order of society, and, I will say, even the freedom of this country. There is no other country in which we find an identical class such as the British farmer; and whatever may have been the consequences of our legislation that is past, if it should be the disappearance or a great diminution of the influence and numbers of that class, it would be a political injury which never could be compensated for by any fiscal or financial results. I am sure your lordships will sympathize with that class. You are deeply connected with the land. You know well all shades of rural life; you have lived among these men; and I feel confident that the sympathy you profess is as cordial and as profound as can animate the breast of man. But, my lords, do not let us be afraid of telling them at this moment that, while we deeply sympathize with them—that while we will lose no opportunity that we can use of legitimately assisting them in the hard trials which they have to encounter—there is nothing, in my mind, which would be a more bitter mockery than to pretend *that by some small adjustment of local taxation we can offer them a remedy for the distress which is produced by such vast, such numerous, and such complicated causes.* If there is anything in the state of our system of taxation which acts unfairly to the British farmer, I cannot doubt that parliament—that both parties in the state—will be prepared and even eager to remedy it. We have shown that before by the series of relief that we have given him.

"When an honourable member in the other House, a county member [Sir Massey Lopes], carried a resolution that it became the duty of the government to revise the local taxation of the country, and relieve real property—including land, of course, as one of the most important portions of real property—from unjust burdens, he was asked to define what were the burdens which he thought were so peculiar and unjust; and it was then that he said the rates on government property ought to be assessed as on all other property; that the care of pauper lunatics should fall on the state; that the registration of births, deaths, &c., should no longer be supplied by local taxation; that the metropolitan police should be supported out of the consolidated fund; that the police of the counties and boroughs of Great Britain—omitting Ireland, because that was already supplied—should be borne upon the consolidated fund; that local prisons should be equally sustained by the general revenue of the country; and so on. That was a definition of the practical claims which were then preferred, and which were sanctioned by a majority of 100 in the House. My lords, from every one of those items during the last five years real property has been relieved, and every one of those burdens has been assisted from the consolidated fund. Of these things the noble marquis has omitted to tell us."

The advocates of reciprocity were not,

however, to be silenced; in spite of the relief granted to the landed interest, as the prime minister had stated, the condition of the country was most unsatisfactory, and it was considered by them that such condition could only be improved by returning to the old paths of protection or reciprocity. A few weeks after the failure of the Marquis of Huntly's motion, Lord Bateman, who had taken a deep interest in the question, and had published a pamphlet upholding the advantages of reciprocity as against isolated free trade, moved, "That this House, fully recognizing the benefits which would result to the community if a system of real free trade were fully adopted, it is expedient in all future commercial negotiations with other countries to advocate a policy of reciprocity between all inter-trading nations." He also moved, "That the long-continued depressed state of the commercial, manufacturing, and agricultural interests should form the subject of a full parliamentary inquiry with the view of ascertaining the causes, the best means of redress, and of counteracting the injurious effects of the excessive tariffs levied by foreign nations against the produce and manufactures of this country."

He rose, said Lord Bateman, to call attention to the past and present operation of the free-trade policy of the country without reciprocity, and to its effect on the various home and colonial industries, and on the revenue and taxation of the kingdom. He was never an admirer of free trade, and still less of free trade as it stood at present. The object of his first resolution was to assert that they had no real free trade—that that which existed was not real, fair, and unrestricted free trade. He frankly admitted that the country had derived very great benefits from the adoption, to a certain extent, of free trade. The experience of thirty years had convinced him that the repeal of the corn laws, carried as it was at a time of great depression and threatened starvation, had been a wise and beneficent measure, from which the working classes and people of England had derived such advantages as had not been calculated upon at the time. Still, when he spoke of the benefits which had resulted from the repeal of the corn laws, it did not follow that free trade had been a real benefit, as it had been carried out since that time. Free trade, as suggested and proposed by Mr. Cobden, was supposed to be *universal free trade*—not free trade confined to England and rejected by every other country. The free trade Mr. Cobden wished to establish was free trade all over the world—unrestricted, fair, free trade—a universal system of exchange and barter all over the world. Nothing, commented the speaker, could be more glorious than such an idea if it had been carried out; but it had not been carried out. This country stood alone in its free-trade policy; it was free trade on the part of England, and protective duties on the part of nearly every other nation.

And what, he asked, had such one-sided free trade brought us? Why, every branch of trade was depressed, enterprise was languishing, and the imports of other countries were over-stocking our markets. Great Britain stood alone in her free-trade theories. Not a single country in Europe, beginning with France and Germany, and ending with Spain and Switzerland—to say nothing of the United States, Australia, and Canada—could be cajoled by the most specious temptations to follow our example, by opening their ports unrestricted by safeguards in the shape of duties to protect their native industry. Was that a good result of the free-trade policy of the country? He had before him statistics which showed that, whilst our imports had increased, our exports had fallen off. Why, then, continue a policy which was fatal to our interests, and which no other country would imitate? He therefore suggested that they should exchange such one-sided free trade for reciprocity. His own definition of reciprocity was that it was not necessarily protection, and that it was in

reality mutual interchange and barter for the benefit of both parties. They had reciprocity in feeling of love, and the only thing in which there was not reciprocity was in commercial affairs. He did not ask for protection; but he contended that if there were no reciprocity there could be no free trade. Reciprocity ought to be regarded as the coping stone of the free-trade system. It was the one thing wanting to the establishment of that universal free trade which every one desired, but which had not yet been secured. To carry out that principle of reciprocity, he proposed a close federation between England and her colonies in all parts of the world, establishing between them free trade in the most unrestricted sense. There was not that cohesion between the mother country and its dependencies which ought to exist. We relied upon foreign imports, and shut out entirely our own colonies from trading with us. Under the system he proposed every scrap of import duty on colonial produce would be abolished, and the result would be that we could snap our fingers at all foreign countries, being no longer dependent upon them. Should foreign nations not accept the principle of reciprocity, England ought, by way of inducing them, to impose a certain small restriction on foreign imports. Lord Bateman then concluded by moving his resolutions.

The resolutions were supported by the Duke of Rutland, who openly advocated a system of protection. The manufacturing interests and the agricultural interests, said his Grace, were so closely connected that when one suffered the other did also. Should protection be granted to the manufacturing interest, a boon would at the same time be conferred upon the agricultural interest. If £5,000,000 were raised by putting a moderate duty on textile fabrics imported into this country, he saw no reason why that sum should not be expended in the relief of agricultural distress. Lord Airlie proposed as an amendment, that the word "real" should be omitted in the first resolution.

The prime minister was not in favour of the motion. "My lords," Lord Beaconsfield said (April 29, 1879), "it cannot be denied that a state of great national prosperity is quite consistent and compatible with legislation in favour of the protection of native industry. That proposition years ago was denied; but viewing the position of things around us, with the experience we have had of France and the United States of America—the two most flourishing communities probably in existence—it cannot for a moment be maintained that the existence of a protective system to the industry of an ancient country is inconsistent with a flourishing condition. Well, my lords, many years ago—nearly forty—this country, which no one can say for a moment did not flourish under the old system of protection, deemed it necessary to revise the principles upon which its commerce was conducted. There were three courses—to use a parliamentary phrase common to those times—which were then open to the eminent man to whom it fell to solve this problem. Sir Robert Peel might, in the first place, have reconstructed our commercial system on a scale of low duties, but applied generally to every item in the tariff. In the second place, he might have endeavoured to reconstruct our commercial system by those commercial treaties of which we have heard so much to-night. And lastly, it lay before him to take a third course, which was at once to determine to fight hostile tariffs with free imports. It is impossible to say what may have been the reasons that ultimately induced that great statesman to take the course which he pursued. I dare say, if we knew it, it probably was that the difficulties of the two other courses, with our complicated parliamentary system, were such that it was impossible to carry them through—that he could not found a system upon a scheme of small and universal duties, and that the attempt to negotiate commercial treaties upon the scale and in the number

that were requisite was not possible at that particular time, and with the passionate feelings which the changes then proposed would naturally excite.

"The scheme that was adopted was this —that we were to fight hostile tariffs with free imports. I was among those who looked upon that policy with fear — I believed it to be one very perilous; and these feelings were shared by numerous parties in both Houses of Parliament and by a numerous and influential party in the country. The decision of England on the question was a decision which was not hurried. Opportunity was offered to discuss it; a whole session of parliament was devoted to it, before the bill which commenced and, I may say, was the crown of the system, the repeal of the corn laws, was carried. After that, two or three years passed when the country experienced great distress in its industry—a distress perhaps not inferior to that it is now going through. There was, of course, much discontent. There was, on the part of those who had opposed the recent change, an earnest and anxious desire naturally to avail themselves of this sharp experience of the country, and obtain a reversal of the policy which, in their opinion, had produced these evils, but which were naturally not produced by the commercial changes of that day, for sufficient time had not elapsed after they had been carried to have produced the evils which were then suffered by the country. The question of free trade was again discussed in both Houses of Parliament. It enlisted the abilities of leading men on both sides. It was put before the country by the press in all its forms. A dissolution of parliament then occurred. At the very time when there was great public distress the country had thus the opportunity of rescinding the national resolution on which the new system was based; and the country refrained from taking that opportunity to pass a verdict which would have forced a reconsideration of the new commercial policy.

"Many of your lordships must know, from your own individual experience, that under these circumstances it was impossible for public men, whatever might have been their opinions upon these great commercial questions when these important changes were first introduced, to have had an open controversy for a quarter of a century. The government of the country could not have been carried on. *It was necessary to bow to the decision of parliament and the country, expressed by its representatives in both Houses, and ultimately by an appeal to the whole nation itself.* That has been the state of affairs as regards the two great parties in the state, however they may have differed originally upon this subject. We have watched, not without anxiety, all that has occurred during this long period; we have modified our opinions with great precaution; we have felt the great sacrifices that were to be made, for the sake of the country, to the expression of the sentiments of the majority. We have not been unaware of the remarkable circumstances, such as the gold discoveries and others, that happened, which could not have been taken into calculation either by those who proposed or those who opposed the great commercial change. The country is now in a state of much suffering and some perplexity; and it is not unnatural your lordships should be asked to consider whether the principles upon which for the last thirty-five years we have acted are really sound and true. The question has been brought before us by my noble friend [Lord Bateman], who for some time has given his attention to the subject. My noble friend read to us some extracts from a pamphlet he has written. We know he has been in active communication with experienced persons who are suffering in the present state of the country. Though I cannot agree that my noble friend addressed us—as I fear I shall have to show —in a manner amounting to logical conviction, he at least showed us, by the manner in which he treated the subject

generally, that it was one with which he was familiar and on which he was perfectly justified in putting his opinions before the House. I regret to say that with most of his statements I cannot agree. I was very much struck by the course my noble friend took. I listened to him with an attention which, I am sure, was not surpassed by any of your lordships. My noble friend took an early opportunity of saying that he was in favour of the repeal of the corn laws, and nothing would induce him to agree to any recurrence to our old legislation upon the subject. This statement did not seem to be endorsed by the recent remarks of the noble duke [the Duke of Rutland], who seemed to look forward to the placing of an import duty on corn as one of the measures which might extricate us from our present difficulty and perplexity.

"The noble lord who has devoted himself to this subject commenced his speech with the most formal declaration that, whatever relief might be devised for the suffering classes and trades of this country, the landowner and the farmer are to have no share in the solace and assistance which are to be found in a duty upon corn. My noble friend proceeded to state that he was entirely opposed to all duties that were levied for revenue, provided that they concerned the food and sustenance of the people; and he gave us one example—one of a group—sufficient in itself, the duty on tea. That, he said, is quite indefensible; why not repeal the duty on tea and put it on spirits? Four millions is a sum which I believe the most sanguine chancellor of the exchequer would hardly anticipate that he could raise by an increase of duties on spirits—particularly at this moment, as it is a declining revenue. My noble friend asked why a duty on tea should be defensible, if a duty on corn of the same amount was not? I remind him that by his own position the *duty on tea is a duty for revenue, and a duty of the same amount on corn would be a duty for protection.* Having told us that he will not bring back the corn duties; that he is prepared to put an end to all duties for revenue; and then having denounced commercial treaties because he considered we have nothing to offer, and we never get anything by them; and having concluded that it is not by any of these the country can be saved, the noble lord said it could be saved only by the principle of reciprocity. Your lordships must have hung upon the accents of the noble lord when he promised to tell us what reciprocity is. At one moment I thought we were to be enlightened on the subject. He gave a picturesque description of a person who had crossed his path in these investigations—he had probably lost his way. The opportunity seemed to have arrived; but it passed, and never recurred again.

"So far as I understand him, reciprocity is barter. I have always understood that barter was the first evidence of civilization—that it was exactly the state of human exchange that separated civilization from savagery; and if reciprocity is only barter, I fear that would hardly help us out of our difficulty. My noble friend read some extracts from the speeches of those who had the misfortune to be in parliament at that time, and he honoured me by reading an extract from the speech I then made in the other House of Parliament. That was a speech in favour of reciprocity—a speech which defined what was then thought to be reciprocity, and indicated the means by which reciprocity could be obtained. I do not want to enter into the discussion whether the principle was right or wrong; but it was acknowledged in public life, favoured and pursued by many statesmen who conceived that by the negotiation of a treaty of commerce, by reciprocal exchange and the lowering of duties, the products of the two negotiating countries would find a freer access and consumption in the two countries than they formerly possessed. But when my noble friend taunts me with a quotation of some rusty phrases of mine forty years ago, I must remind him that *we had elements then on which treaties of recip-*

rocity could be negotiated. At that time, although the great changes of Sir Robert Peel had taken place, there were 168 *articles in the tariff which were materials by which you could have negotiated, if that was a wise and desirable policy, commercial treaties of reciprocity. What is the number you now have in the tariff? Twenty-two. Those who talk of negotiating treaties of reciprocity—have they materials for negotiating treaties of reciprocity? You have lost the opportunity. I do not want to enter into the argument, at the present moment, whether this was wise or not; but the policy which was long ago abandoned you cannot now resume.*

"You have at this moment a great number of commercial treaties. I will not charge my memory with stating the exact number of commercial treaties we have, they are very numerous; but this I know, you have nearly forty commercial treaties with some of the most considerable countries in the world—the United States, Germany, and others—in which 'the most favoured nation clause' is included. Well, suppose you are for a system of reciprocity, as my noble friend proposes. He enters into negotiations with a state; he says—'You complain of our high duties on some particular articles. We have not many, we have a few left; we shall make some great sacrifice to induce you to enter into a treaty for an exchange of products.' But the moment you contemplate agreeing with the state that you will make concessions by lowering some duties on the few articles remaining, every other of the forty states with 'the most favoured nation clause' claims exactly the same privilege. *The fact is, practically speaking, reciprocity, whatever its merits, is dead. You cannot, if you would, build up a reciprocal system of commercial treaties. You have lost the power; you have given up the means by which you could before obtain such a result as my noble friend desires.* But he has no other scheme to put before us but the scheme of reciprocity, which I wish to show your lordships does not exist. The noble lord sneered at our last treaty with Servia. It secures us the advantage of 'the most favoured nation clause.' The noble earl who last addressed us (the Earl of Morley) showed, according to his views, the fallacy of the principle of commercial reciprocity. I do not want to get into that part of the case. I hold myself free on that subject. But here it is a phantom. There are no means, and no men—from whatever side the government of the country may be drawn, whatever members may form it—who can come forward now with a large system of commercial exchange founded on the system of reciprocity. The opportunity, like the means, has been relinquished; and if this is the only mode in which we are to extricate ourselves from the great distress which prevails, our situation is hopeless. I should be very sorry to say, whatever the condition of the country, its condition is hopeless. I have had the opportunity, and it was my duty, during the last six months to investigate the real condition of some of the principal industries of this country, and I cannot trace to our great commercial changes any of the depression and evils which they experience and complain of—except, I admit, in the case of land.

"I cannot for a moment doubt that the repeal of the corn laws—on the policy of which I do not enter—has materially affected the condition of those who are interested in land. I do not mean to say that this is the only cause of landed distress. There are other reasons—general distress, the metallic changes, have all had an effect; but *I cannot shut my eyes to the conviction that the termination of protection to the landed interest has materially tended to the condition in which it finds itself.* But that is no reason why we should come suddenly to an opinion that we should retrace our steps, and authorize and sanction any violent changes. This state of affairs is one which has long threatened—it has been contemplated by many high authorities. It has arrived. I cannot shut my eyes to the fact, and we must consider every step

we take with reference to it. I cannot give up the expectation that the energy of this country will bring about a condition of affairs more favourable to the various classes which form the landed interest of this country. I should look upon it as a great misfortune to this country that the character, and power, and influence of the landed interest and its valuable industry should be diminished, and should experience anything like a fatal and final blow. It would in my opinion be a great misfortune, not to this country alone, but to the world, for it has contributed to the spirit of liberty and order more than any other class that has existed in modern times.

"My lords, I have put before you the remarks that have occurred to me on the motion of my noble friend. He has got hold of a very good question in the national distress; but it appears to me, that before he proceeds in his adventure of finding the remedy for it, it is absolutely necessary that he should study more precision, both of thought and language. I listened with much attention to his agreeable speech; but I really do not know what he requires. He is against protection. I understand the views of my noble friend the noble duke [the Duke of Rutland]. They are consistent. They are the same he expressed when seated on my right hand forty years ago, and he is still ready to act upon them. He is prepared to propose and carry out, if he can, a certain degree of protection to the land. But my noble friend who asks us to pass this resolution utterly disclaims that; he utterly disclaims everything but a phantom. I cannot support my noble friend when he asks us to pass resolutions of this grave character, and when he himself disclaims the very grounds on which he might have framed, not what I think was a correct, but a plausible case. It is a very unwise course, in my opinion, when the country is not in a state so satisfactory as we could wish, when all classes, no doubt, of the industry of the country are in a position of uneasiness—it is, in my opinion, an unwise course to propose any inquiry which has not either some definite object, or is likely to lead to some action on the part of those who bring it forward. I think it would be most unwise for us to come to a resolution to have an inquiry into the causes of public distress, when that inquiry is evidently one which would end only in asking questions. It would lead to great disappointment and uneasiness on the part of the country; and the classes who are trying to realize the exact difficulties they have to encounter, and devising the best means to overpower and change them, would relapse into a lax state which might render them incapable of making the exertions it is necessary for them to make. Therefore, I cannot sanction, so far as my vote is concerned, the course recommended by my noble friend.

"Looking into the state of the country, I do not see there is any great mystery in the causes which have produced a state of which there is undoubted general complaint. What has happened in our own commercial fortunes during the last ten years will explain it. The great collapse which naturally followed the convulsion of prosperity which seemed to deluge the world, and not merely this country; the fact that other countries have been placed in an equally disagreeable situation, though their commercial systems were founded upon principles the contrary of our own—these are circumstances which appear to me to render it quite unnecessary to enter into an inquiry on this subject. I do not mean to say that there are not moments, that there are not circumstances, in which an inquiry by parliament or by a royal commission into the causes of national distress may not be allowable—may not be necessary; but it must be a distress of a very different kind from that which we are now experiencing. We must have the consciousness that the great body of the people are in a situation intolerable to them, and that no persons with any sense of responsibility

would think they had done their duty without examining and reporting on the causes of it. That is not the condition of the people. That there is great suffering—that the leading personages of all classes are suffering—I admit; but the bulk of the people are in a condition which everyone must acknowledge it would be absurd to describe as one of distress and despair. I hope myself, and firmly believe, although I know that many of great authority in this matter are sceptical—I believe that there is a change for the better in the industrial world; and though, after what has been said to-night, I do not care again to talk about America, much that I hear from America confirms that belief. I am sure there will be no want of sympathy in this House with the sufferings of the people of this country; and if to-night your lordships do not accept the proposition of my noble friend, it is because—and the country will understand what is meant—it is because it is a proposition which can lead to no public benefit."

After this speech Lord Bateman declined to divide the House. His main object, he said, in bringing forward the subject had been to provoke discussion upon it.

In opposing these two motions for inquiry into the state of the agricultural interest, Lord Beaconsfield did not belie the opinions he formerly held. He was careful not to condemn the principles of reciprocity or protection in the abstract; he would not argue the point, as it was useless; all he asserted was that "recent legislation" had rendered a return to reciprocity impossible, by the sweeping reductions which had taken place in our system of tariffs. The country, after mature deliberation, had abandoned the theory of protection, and it was not the business of one government to upset the legislation of its predecessor. In the old days he had upheld the corn laws, because the land had been heavily burdened with exceptional taxation; but such taxation had been removed, and therefore there was now no occasion to benefit the landed interest at the expense of the consuming classes generally. He frankly admitted that the situation of the English farmer was grave; but he also admitted that the agricultural interest in any country would suffer and cry out when exposed to a succession of bad harvests. The elements were more to blame for the depression than the abandonment of protection or the existence of foreign competition. The agricultural interest was passing through a crisis similar to that which every interest and every trade had at one time or another to pass through; it would recover, as other interests had recovered, and there was therefore no need for exceptional legislation.

Nor did Lord Beaconsfield despair of the future of the agriculture of the country. He was of opinion that, with the re-arrangement of rents then taking place, with the land relieved of much of the inequitable taxation imposed upon it, with a just scale of compensation for unexhausted improvements, with ample security for the tenant's capital, with consistent legislation to prevent the introduction of contagious diseases from foreign countries, and with the return of fine seasons, which were sure to recur, farming would once more be a prosperous occupation in the country. He was in favour of any commission of inquiry in order to investigate the grievances complained of; but he could not sanction a remedy which would call into play a system of legislation which had been deliberately abandoned by the country. They could now no more restore protection than they could restore the heptarchy. If protection or reciprocity were possible, then the subject might be discussed; but since they were both out of the question, it was idle to argue the matter.

Meanwhile the subject had given rise to much discussion in the House of Commons. Protection was not openly advocated, but it was stoutly denied that the apostles of free trade had proved themselves correct in their surmises. "Free trade," said Mr.

Chaplin, when moving for a commission of inquiry, "I confess to myself, and probably also to others of my generation, has always presented itself as a question which, whether for good or for evil, was settled during the last generation with the deliberate sanction and approval of the nation; and certainly, therefore, I would not myself be prepared to hastily or to lightly discard that which has been so long accepted as the universal decision of the country. At the same time, I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that, while the assurances and predictions of Mr. Cobden and other distinguished men at that time have not been fulfilled, but have, on the other hand, in many respects been proved by experience to have been entirely and totally wrong, the circumstances of to-day have entirely altered from those under which free trade at that time was adopted. When, for instance, the dangers which might arise to this country if England alone among nations adopted free trade were pointed out by its opponents, they were always met with the assurance, repeated by Mr. Cobden over and over again, 'that these dangers could never arise, because all other countries, seeing the obvious benefits we should derive from free trade, would follow our example.'" It was also contended that, when the corn laws were repealed, it had never been anticipated that grain could be imported into this country at so cheap a rate as to make it impossible for the landed interest, under the most favourable circumstances, to attempt to compete with foreign corn. Farmers had therefore relinquished all hope of obtaining profit out of the growing of corn, and had looked to their stock for compensation; but now, what with cattle from Canada, beef from America, and mutton from Australia, the agricultural interest found itself utterly incapable of making any headway against the overwhelming competition from abroad.

"The growing of wheat at 40*s.* a quarter," said the Duke of Rutland, "could not be made to pay its cost on the great majority of lands in this country. It was said, 'Why not turn your land into grass?' But here again we were met by importations from abroad. America sent meat here a great deal cheaper than it could be produced in this country. As a result of free trade, land was going out of grain cultivation and being turned into grass. Mr. Caird said that within the last ten years 2,000,000 of acres had been thrown out of corn cultivation in this country. Was that a safe or a profitable thing? Was it safe to rely on the caprice of the foreigner for our food supply? After the adoption of free trade a one shilling import duty on corn was retained, which produced £1,000,000 sterling of revenue; but that small duty had since been gratuitously repealed [for which remission farmers have to thank Mr. Lowe]. Why should that have gone to appease the frantic free traders? The truth was that it was, in the present circumstances, impossible to grow beef or corn except at a loss. Ten years ago, nine-tenths of the meat we consumed was of home growth, whereas only one-third was produced at home at the present time. It was an alarming fact that each English family sent abroad £15 annually for food alone."

Even Lord Hartington had to admit that the land system of England had broken down. Various remedies were suggested to meet the difficulty. There was, of course, the hard political economist with his cut and dry theory that it was not the business of the state to "cocker up" any particular industry; and that if the agricultural interest was a failure, it was a proof that the country could do without the agricultural interest, and therefore such interest had better turn its attention to some more remunerative calling. Then it was suggested that the land laws should be revised. "You have," said Mr. Bright, "land that has always been boasted of as very fertile, and a climate favourable to all kinds of labour. I believe it would increase the price of land all over the country if you

were to abolish all the ancient, stupid, and mischievous legislation by which you are embarrassed at every step you take in dealing with it. Let us have the inquiry, then. Let us have it wide and honest. Let us look this great spectre which you are afraid of fairly in the face. You cannot escape from it, and if you meet it wisely it may prove, perhaps, to be no more than a spectre. At least let us break down the monopoly that has banished so much of your labour from your farms, and that has pauperized so much of the labour which has remained. On the ruins of that monopoly, when you have broken it down, there will arise a fairer fabric; and although it is not possible that I should live to see it, yet the time will come when you will have a million homes of comfort and independence throughout the land of England, which will attest for ever the wisdom and the blessedness of the new policy that you have adopted." Others, again, suggested that the cultivation of the soil should be re-adjusted, and that farmers should raise such produce as could, in spite of foreign competition, be made to pay a fair profit.

"The business of agriculture in this country," wrote Mr. James Caird, perhaps the highest living authority on agricultural subjects, "is to feed 34,000,000 of people with that portion of their daily food which we can best supply, and at the same time maintain many millions of horses, cattle, sheep, and pigs, which minister to the wants and comforts of our daily life. In the household of all families above that of the workman, nine-tenths of the expenditure on articles of food of home produce are for meat, butter, beer, milk, and only one-tenth for bread; and in that of the workman his bread does not amount to more than one-third of his daily expenditure on food. There is now, happily, little risk of any season, however bad, creating a dearth of bread; and as there is every reason to believe that meat and cheese will for some time be kept within moderate prices, the outlook of the British farmer should be encouraged towards the production of these in the finest quality, and of butter, milk, cream, lamb, veal, hay, straw, and vegetables of every kind. These, with barley and oats, so long as they maintain their price, and a smaller reliance on wheat, which of all kinds of corn is the most costly to produce at home, and of the widest-spread area of capable production abroad, seem for the present the most likely objects of home agriculture." At the same time it was suggested that a minister of agriculture should be appointed, especially to deal with the administrative details of commerce and agriculture. A few cynical country gentlemen also gave it as their opinion that the English farmer had of late years expected too much from the soil; that, owing to many seasons of prosperity, he had affected to be less of the yeoman and more of the gentleman than had his forefathers; and that now in the hour of adversity, owing to the expenditure beyond his station which he had maintained, he was crippled in his resources and unable to pay his rent. He had no doubt, they admitted, suffered from foreign competition, but he had also suffered from domestic competition with his social superiors.

Whatever views ministers held as to protection or reciprocity, there could be no doubt but that the depressed condition of the agricultural interest was a subject at least fully deserving of investigation. The royal commission on agriculture was appointed, and its scheme of inquiry had been made public. England was to be divided into districts, and the following matters were to be exhaustively gone into:—The condition of the farms; the condition of the farmers; the condition of the labourer; the land laws; land tenancy; agricultural education; the condition of estates; agricultural statistics to be furnished by the Board of Trade; returns of imports and exports of agricultural produce to be furnished by the Customs; and importations of agricultural produce from

foreign countries. As the inquiry was to be most elaborate it was expected that the labours of the commission would occupy some two years. Unkind friends predicted no good from the appointment of the commission, and said that it was only a soothing syrup concocted by the Conservative party to keep the farmers quiet until the next general election was over.

At the same time certain farmers formed themselves into a body called the "Farmers' Alliance," to protect their interests and to cope with the prevailing depression. This alliance alleged that it had eight definite objects in view:—1. To secure the better representation of tenant-farmers in parliament; 2, to stimulate the improved cultivation of the land, and obtain security for the capital of tenants invested in the improvement of their holdings; 3, to encourage greater freedom in the cultivation of the soil and the disposal of its produce; 4, to obtain the abolition of class privileges involved in the laws of distress and hypothec; 5, to promote the reform of the game laws; 6, to obtain the alteration of all legal presumptions which operate unfairly against tenant-farmers; 7, to secure to ratepayers their legitimate share in county government; and 8, to obtain a fair apportionment of local burdens between landlord and tenant. It cannot be said that this active and disturbing programme has as yet been carried out; the so-called Farmers' Alliance appears, under its somewhat interested directors, to have degenerated into an advertising medium for the sale of agricultural implements and of artificial manures.*

During the recess the question of agricultural depression was well ventilated throughout the country, and furnished the text for much extra-parliamentary oratory. Lord Beaconsfield, whilst presiding at the annual dinner of the Bucks agricultural association, which was held at Aylesbury (September 18, 1879), again spoke at much length on the subject. His speech has not been republished, and deserves attention. "There can be no question," he said, after a few observations passed upon local topics, "that there is at this moment in the agricultural interests of this country a strain certainly unprecedented in the lives of all present, and probably not easily to be equalled even in the records of our history. It has been announced, as a subject fit for popular discussion, by one [Lord Hartington] who may be considered a high authority, that the present unsatisfactory state of affairs may perhaps be traced to the constitution of our system, and that the agricultural system has, to use words with which you are now familiar, 'broken down.' It has broken down, we are told, because there are general expressions of discontent with the situation, and because there is undoubtedly considerable distress. Well, a year ago, when a bank in the commercial capital of Scotland suddenly broke, when the fall shook that highly civilized country to its

* "It is an organization, however, the importance of which must not be ignored. I sincerely believe it to be most dangerous, mischievous, and insidious in its character. It had evidently been well considered and thought out in all its bearings by its promoters, before they launched it on the public. I believe it to be far-reaching and widely comprehensive in its objects. It embraces the aspirations of the Irish Home Ruler by practically granting fixity of tenure without requiring an equivalent from one party or granting compensation to the other, which is nothing less than robbery and confiscation; whilst it, at the same time, plays into the hands of the Manchester and Birmingham schools, whose objects have ever been to destroy the bulwarks and undermine the foundation upon which the agricultural interests of this country have stood and flourished for generations past. The line of action of the Farmers' Alliance is, first to create a feud between landlord and tenant; but it will not stop here, for its next move will be to set the labourer against his employer, and having succeeded in producing this chaotic condition of things it expects to swamp the political influence of the agricultural interest and turn it in its own favour. It will be a sorry day for England when the three great interests—landlord, tenant, and labourer—become separated, for from that day will date the downfall of British agriculture. Is not, therefore, the action of the Radical party, through this instrument in their hands—the Farmers' Alliance—most unpatriotic, at a moment especially when the best endeavours of all right-minded men ought to be directed towards cementing more closely and firmly the bonds that unite the interests of landlord and tenant, and thus enabling them together to tide over this serious period of unparalleled depression, instead of turning it to their own selfish and political advantage? I see in the daily action of the present government how closely allied it is with the Farmers' Alliance, which is a powerful lever in the hands of Mr. Gladstone whenever he thinks fit to make use of it for electioneering purposes."—*Speech of Jacob Wilson, February* 17, 1882.

very centre, when it affected some of the greatest commercial houses carrying on the greatest commercial business in the world, when it produced a state of affairs, a distress, which I can hardly describe—a condition of desolation—nobody went about and said that this was proof that the commercial system of this country had broken down. And a few years before, I recollect that there was a day of deepest anxiety for this country—a day still remembered as Black Friday—when the commercial credit of this country had ceased for four and twenty hours to exist. Nobody then went about and said that the commercial system of England had broken down. Why, if you were to pursue the subject further, which at this moment it may not be convenient for want of time to do, I remember even at an earlier period when one of the highest authorities in the country said that we were within four and twenty hours of a state of bankruptcy—this great country with its many resources. But nobody went about and said, because there was this strain and distress, the commercial system of England had broken down.

"I admit, however, there is distress on the part of the agricultural interest, and I am sorry to say there are some who seem eager to recognize, not only signs of distress, but of decadence. Then we find them going about and announcing that these circumstances are symptomatic of the break-down of the agricultural system. I do not presume to indicate what is the wisest course for all classes of the agricultural interest to pursue at the present moment; but I think it of great importance that clear ideas as to your situation, as to your position, as to your responsibility should prevail, because you may be hurried into conclusions and into conduct which, if you had been better informed or had given further thought to the matter, you would not, perhaps, have sanctioned and adopted. Now, it has been intimated by a great authority that the cause of our agricultural system having broken down may probably be that it is unlike the agricultural system of any other country; that it is founded upon an unnatural principle; that it is essentially artificial; and that the essence of its artificial character is that in this country three classes are dependent upon the produce of the soil, who are according to the system necessary to its cultivation. I have taken an opportunity, the earliest I conveniently had, to combat opinions which I think are most fallacious and must be most disadvantageous to the country. I have laid it down as a principle which can be demonstrated in the most complete and satisfactory manner, that whatever may be your tenure of the land, whatever may be the number of classes concerned in its management and cultivation, there must be what is now familiarly termed *three profits obtained from the land.* The cultivator of the soil naturally says, 'I will not cultivate the soil without being fed, and clothed, and nourished for my pay,' and that I take to be a reward which is called wages. Then the cultivator of the soil—whatever he may be called, farmer or otherwise—who furnishes the floating capital which is to stock the soil, is the capitalist who finds the capital, which, like that of the farmers, must have a return, or the capital never would be advanced. In the third instance, I say that whether the cultivator of the soil pays his farming from his savings, or, as is usually the case under such circumstances, by borrowing it, his interest or the return for his capital is, in fact, rent; and when we are told that the agricultural system has broken down because three profits by our system are required from the soil, it is as well to show that in a system the most contrary to the system which has existed in this country—namely, that which prevails in some continental countries in the shape of peasant proprietorship—although only one individual takes the three profits, still the three profits must be claimed.

"Well, then, public newspapers circulate their views and express them with energy

and propriety. I received very recently one of those journals, and this is their scheme for the re-elevation of this country and their method by which we are to protect those who are interested in the land, and to enable them to extricate themselves from their difficulties. What is the scheme? I will put it before you briefly, because on an occasion like the present I know that brevity must be studied. It is their opinion that this country ought to institute a vast body of small proprietors; they have fixed the amount of the proprietary at twelve acres; they have worked it out in complete detail, and call upon the government of the country to carry it into effect. Now, what are these details? I mention the most important and those most interesting. It is calculated that a quantity of land, amounting to twelve acres, with a farmstead and necessary buildings, may be obtained for a little more than £600—for £610; and they propose that the sum of £40 per annum should be paid for thirty years for the holding; at the end of that term it would become a freehold. But they are not sanguine that those who embark in those speculations will agree to pay £40 a year, which I will not call rent, but on which you can form your own opinions. They propose that the country should supply each holder of those 12-acre farms with £120 to stock the farm, and also they call upon him not merely to return interest, but they look to him to supply what we may call wear and tear. What is that but the duty which the farmer is now fulfilling? Well, having bought his land under circumstances, paying a heavier rent than is usual, and obtaining a floating capital by the credit of the state, the man may probably cultivate twelve acres with effect. But while he cultivates these twelve acres he will expect to be paid, he will expect to be lodged, he will expect to be clothed; and the third profit will appear in the shape of wages. Therefore, according to the very accounts of those, to the very estimates of those, who are offering these mild schemes as the cure for one evil, three profits must arise from the land.

"I know, gentlemen, that these are questions which require some attention. Your position is critical at this moment, and you must give your minds to these questions. I know it may be said that, after all, we do not care for, we do not fear, this competition of Europe; but we do fear the competition of America. Well, now, first let me show you for a moment what is the competition of Europe if this new system, this new theory, is adopted—that the assumed break down of the agricultural system of England is occasioned by its having to support three classes. I have shown you that, whether there is one class or three classes, equally three profits must be received; and for myself I believe that it *is much more advantageous to a country that the three profits should be divided among three classes than it should be received by one.* It is a system which has given to this country an independent class. This, I think, has worked well for the liberty of England and its order. It has given us in the farmer the most important portion of the middle class, which all wise men have looked upon as one of the best elements for the security of the state; and it has given you an agricultural peasantry, who, whatever they may say—and the charges against us with respect to their position are generally made by those who are not acquainted with it—I know myself, from my own experience, at this moment is prosperous and content.

"Well, now, before I touch on America, which my friends, naturally interested in this question, wish me to do, let me make one remark about this subject of peasant proprietors. I introduced originally the question of peasant proprietors, where one individual obtains the three profits, as the complete answer to those who said that because three profits were obtained the unsatisfactory state of the agricultural interest might be explained. But in France we know, on the highest

authority, the question of peasant proprietorship has been tried upon the greatest scale. There are, by the best accounts, in France 5,000,000 of peasant proprietors who do not hold each more than six acres of land—that is, 30,000,000 acres. The experiment has been tried upon 30,000,000 acres, and what is the result of the experiment? You may refine and explain as you like, but what is the result of the experiment of these 5,000,000 of proprietors occupying a superficies of 30,000,000 acres compared with what our 500,000 farmers have done? Remember what you are trying this test on. France has a most fertile soil, while that of England is ungrateful. You are trying it when that fertile soil is managed by the most ingenious and thrifty nation in the world—a nation that can make something out of nothing; that displays in its management the greatest ability. But what is the result? *It is that the production of England per acre is double that of France.* The average of England is twenty-eight bushels per acre, in France it is fourteen. I say that these are subjects that ought to be well understood by all classes of agricultural interests.

"My summing up is this—that when we are told that our agricultural system has failed in consequence of three classes being sustained by the land, I say that is a complete fallacy; for, whatever may be your tenure, the same results will occur. *Three profits in all circumstances must be obtained from the land, and the question arises whether it is not better that amount of profit should be represented by three classes rather than by one class.* Proceeding in this argument, let me refer to the exclamation of a gentleman respecting America. I do not deny the great difficulties we have to encounter, and I should have been glad at once to have adverted to them; but with your permission I would make some brief remarks on the American question. We hear every day that it is impossible to compete with America. There may be other causes which have prostrated our energy at the present moment; but I will not give any decided opinion on that matter. It is a singular circumstance, that at this moment the greatest apprehension is felt in the United States that they cannot compete with Canada. The taxation of America is so high, the rates of wages are so high, that it is impossible, according to some of the best American authorities, that they can any longer continue to successfully compete with Canada. What is the position of Canada? If we are to be fed by Canada, it is at least satisfactory that we shall be fed by our fellow-subjects; but let us look for a moment at the situation of Canada, which is most peculiar. Since the surrender of the Hudson Bay Company and the settlement of their affairs, the Dominion of Canada became possessed of what I might almost describe as an illimitable wilderness, and a wilderness of fertile land. Now, it is a peculiar circumstance, but to be noted, that the Dominion of Canada is not in favour of peasant proprietorship. What the Dominion of Canada is anxious for is a great yeoman class. It has legislated with that purpose. Its legislation is now an influence for that purpose, and let us see what is their legislation. Every harvestman, every man of fair character who comes to Canada, has a right to apply to the government agent, to claim and to obtain what is called a quarter section of land. That quarter section of land consists of 160 acres; he receives those 160 acres on condition that at the end of three years he will reduce them to perfect cultivation, and that in the interval he will raise a substantial and real building upon the land. At the end of those three years the government inspector visits the allotment. If it is found that the farmer has fulfilled the conditions, that he has completely cultivated the 160 acres and raised the necessary buildings, he is permitted to receive an equal quantity — that is to say, another quarter-section of 160 acres—on the payment of a dollar an acre; and no greater

payment, even if the value of land in the interval had greatly increased.

"You will observe from the first moment that this is not a scheme of small peasant proprietors; it is not likely that a man will be able to reduce 320 acres to cultivation and put buildings on the land through his own efforts. He must begin and proceed with hired labour. What is hired labour in Canada? Hired labour is not less than hired labour in the United States. The rudest labourer will get 12*s.* a day, and a skilled labourer 16*s.* or 18*s.* The first thing that the new yeoman does—what I say I say on the highest authority—is to calculate the value of his freehold. The value of his freehold depends on the amount he has to pay those six years in hired labour, in buildings, and the amount he paid for the last quarter-section; and at 4 per cent. he writes off interest. What is that but rent? Now, there is another very curious circumstance which I will venture to mention on this occasion, because I have heard it on as high an authority on the subject as can be conceived, and that is, that the sudden cultivation years ago of the extreme Western states of the United States, which first, I think, alarmed this country and drew its attention to it, and, no doubt, affected prices—that in that country the production, which was extreme at the commencement, has been reduced one-third, generally speaking, and in some instances one-half; and that the chief pioneers who advanced so greatly the cultivation of the extreme Western states of the United States have all sold, or to a great degree have sold their farms, and have sold them, allow me to say, at thirty and forty dollars an acre, showing as an essential thing that there was a basis of rent included in the arrangement inseparable from the tenure. They have sold their farms, and they are now repairing to the illimitable wilderness of Canada.

"You will ask me, What is my inference? My inference is a practical one. It may not be an interesting one, it may not be a satisfactory one; but I think you will, on reflection, deem it a wise one—that where you are, as far as foreign competition is concerned, it is wise not to take—I speak to the landlord and the occupier equally—it is wise not to take precipitate steps. But take care that you do not conclude that that is permanent which is only transitory, though upon that subject I give no opinion, because I think it would be presumption in any one of us to give any opinion; but still I feel convinced that where you have to deal with new circumstances, that where you find them of so transitory a nature that the very land which four or five years ago, by its extraordinary produce of fifty bushels an acre, affected the market in England and frightened all those who are competent to think, to ponder, and to form an opinion upon the subject, it is wise, when you see circumstances so transitory that the very place of competition is doubtful, and when you hear that Canada expects completely and successfully to beat the United States from the European markets, it is wise for us not to take any precipitate steps.

"There is another reason why I think, in considering the present position of the agricultural interest, we should not act with precipitation. Let us for a moment dismiss from our minds all external considerations. Let us look at what has passed in our own country during the last five years. Has nothing passed which may account for a great deal of distress and suffering? Is it not a fact that for five years the farmer has sought in vain for a quick and matured produce for his labours? We have had bad harvests; we have had as bad harvests as any men have had to encounter, but we have not had a lustre of bad harvests. You have gone on and on, fairly hoping that nature would reassert itself; and if you had one or two bad harvests you have always believed the time would naturally come in which you would find a remedy. Well, that is not the case; but it is necessary that we should be conscious that there

is a strain upon the proprietors of the land which they have not in our experience ever endured. Well, what is the natural course we should take; what is the step we should pursue in such circumstances? I cannot doubt what is the course we ought to take. The rents of England have been calculated upon a fair average of nature and our experience of the results. What has happened during the last five years has been entirely contrary to those calculations, and to my mind it is the duty—and for all I hear it may be the willing duty—of the proprietors of the soil to come forward, to stand by that class with whom there had never been any want of affection, and duty, and devotion.

"I say that I believe the landlords of England are prepared to do their duty on this occasion; but what I want to impress upon you, and if I may presume to do so, upon numbers of the agricultural interest who are not present in this hall, is, that it is of vital importance that they should thoroughly comprehend the present state of affairs. Now, I do not want to take refuge in general expressions. I say, for one, that reduction of rent calculated on the uniform percentage of the rent does not appear to me to be a panacea for the evils which we have to encounter, or the remedy for those calamities which most of us experience and all acknowledge. When I consider the variety of the soils in this country, the variety of climes even, I would say, in this island; when I remember the peculiar circumstances of districts, I would even say the peculiar circumstances of estates; when I mention what I know is a fact, and which many of you must know, that in the same district, with the same conditions, with the same soil, with the same climate, with the same amount of labour, that the rents are very different as to the rate at which they are apportioned—it seems to me that there is only one conclusion to arrive at, that we should examine every individual instance, and that the aid which landlord and tenant should give each other should be from reciprocal acquaintance of each other's duties and necessities. Ten per cent. reduction of rent may be, in some instances, a very agreeable Christmas-box, if it comes at the time; but I know instances in which 10 per cent. reduction of rent would be utterly insufficient to meet the circumstances of the case. I consider myself, however, in a judicial position, and therefore you will permit me to say that there are some cases in which even 10 per cent. reduction of rent is not necessary.

"Gentlemen, this is the spirit in which I think the present state of affairs ought to be encountered. I would not too curiously inquire into the question of the competition of America, and I will tell you why. I have had an opportunity lately of some conversation on this subject with one who may probably be considered the highest living authority on such matters, which are almost as political, I may say, as statistical; and he told me that he was quite perplexed, after the deepest and most minute inquiry as to what would be the result to Canada of 200,000,000 of the acres of the wilderness being gradually brought into cultivation. He said he saw there were some who believed, and he shared that opinion, that, under all circumstances, the market of the United States would be destroyed; but as regards Canada itself, he said, if the influx of population were to go on as it is going on now—but that we cannot expect—in consequence of those fertile acres being placed at their disposal, he could not tell what might be the consequence. That population would demand itself, not only sustenance, but extravagant and extreme sustenance; and for his part he would not be surprised, with the impulsive character of humanity in the United States, if that wilderness which now so alarms us is not soon occupied by consuming millions. Therefore, I say that it is not wise at this moment to attempt to take into precise consideration the influence of those markets. When that influence is ascertained, it will be recognized and we

must act upon it, but we ought to take into consideration the influence of unfruitful seasons in this country. This is a subject which we cannot avoid, which is fatally and painfully precise. It has had an effect upon the condition of the farming class that never was anticipated, and never could have been wished by the owners of land. We have, alas! heard that their interests were identical, that between the landlord and the tenant there were feelings of regard and affection, and I have always had a most solemn and sincere belief in their operation; but if ever there were a case in which that sympathy should be shown, it is the present. It would be not merely a great danger for ourselves, but it would be a great danger for England, that the farming class should be reduced either in influence or in numbers.

"I would make one more remark upon the position in which we are placed, with reference to the want of precise information as to the effect of American produce on our position in England. I may remind you that we have, by a royal commission, sent to the United States and Canada two men of your own class, men of considerable ability, men who have had the advantage of enlightened opportunity in the House of Commons for many years to become acquainted with those principles on which a state ought to be governed. These two men—two great ornaments of the farming class in this country—are visiting America, and I await with confidence and interest their communications. But let me say there is no reason why, because we are placed in an indefinite position with regard to foreign supplies and have taken all these means to obtain information, the farmers of England should not take every legitimate step to make their position more satisfactory, if they have occasion to complain. I want to remind you of a subject which is sometimes forgotten—the introduction by the present government of the Agricultural Holdings Act. That Act is described by a stupid word generally used by stupid people—the Act is called a sham by those who have never read the Act and never studied it, and never profited by it. I will show you in a sentence or two that *that Act is a living Act.* It is an Act of the utmost advantage to the farmers already; and if they were wise, it would be productive of great future advantage. That Act in the first place, for the first time in English legislation, gave the presumption of all improvements in the land to the credit of the farmer and not the landlord. That alone was a very great affair. That Act secured compensation to the farmer for unexhausted improvements, and it did it in a manner which met the wants of different classes of improvements. It gave the best security that no dissension and quarrels should occur between landlord and occupier. That Act also extended the period of notices to quit from six to twelve months. You may say, and I know it will be said by those who know nothing about it, that all the world have contracted themselves out of this Act. A great many persons have contracted themselves out of that Act who ought not to have done so, and a great many men are now ashamed of having contracted themselves out of it; but I let that pass.

"Such an extraordinary stream of mendacity has been poured on this Act that I need not dwell on the point at length. It was said, for instance, that the noble duke who brought the bill forward had contracted himself out of the Act. My noble friend the Duke of Richmond has always given leases to his tenants; he prefers leases; therefore it was impossible for him to contract himself out of the Act. The other minister who brought it forward in the House of Commons was a gentleman who was a member for the county of Buckingham, and I defy any one to say that any of his tenants contracted themselves out of it. I have seen a good many of these contracts, and they deal with the varying conditions of the soil and climate of England. And we find cases where the contracting parties,

knowing nothing about it, have made contracts agreeing to all the vital points in the Act; and the only advantage the occupier and tenant have is that their contracts are drawn up in a manner which may involve them in litigation; whereas, if they had stuck to the Act of Parliament, they would have avoided that result. In most of these contracts I find that notice to quit is increased to one year; that is not as far as I would wish to go, as I have often said, but no doubt the arrangement was a prudent one. Most of their contracts agree, as a matter of course, that the tenant is to be compensated for his investment in the soil.

"Before I sit down I must make one remark, that I ought to apologize for having spoken at this length. You will remember that one gets garrulous when one meets one's old friends. You will not forget the various scenes that have taken place with reference to this society—the struggles we have had and the contests that we have had to encounter; and you will not forget that for a term longer than a generation you intrusted to me the greatest honour of my life, the office of being your representative; and I did not think I should be doing my duty to-day in merely meeting you at a time of strain and trial like the present, and indulging only in a few commonplace remarks. There is no doubt that there is a party in this England—I don't believe a very numerous party, but a very busy one—who always view with feelings of hostility the agricultural interest. They do so because they are opposed to the free and aristocratic government. You may get rid of that government, gentlemen; but if you do you will have either *a despotism that ends in democracy, or a democracy that ends in despotism.* A year ago, when the pressure was first touching us, when in addition to the general sufferings of the country, it began to be whispered that the agricultural interest was suffering, that party sprung immediately to their legs; they saw a golden opportunity, as they thought, and their first step was an attempt to agitate the agricultural labourers of the country. Fortunately, these men who attempted to agitate in rural England were thorough cockneys. They were not, perhaps, born in London, but they were born in another town that often makes a greater noise. If they had known anything of country life, they would have known they had got the wrong end of the stick; that if there were any class connected with the land in England that was unusually prosperous, it was the agricultural labourer. But when those meetings were held and the dreadful news was announced that agricultural labourers in some parts of England were only getting 14*s.* a week the absurdity of the whole affair was too ludicrous for contemplation. Even the agricultural labourers who made those complaints could scarcely keep their countenances. They knew well that during the forty years their wages had been raised 40 per cent. They knew very well, that with those increased wages, their purchasing power of all that was requisite for life was immensely increased. They knew very well that throughout England, to a great extent, their habitations were immensely improved, in themselves a source not only of health but of income; and the agitation founded upon data so fallacious quickly evaporated. But a year ago they were setting the agricultural labourers against the farmers; now they are attempting to set the farmers against the landlords. This will never do. The government of England will always be supported by those who have the spirit of justice and liberality and of affection. We have stood together under many trials, and England has recognized that in the influence, the just influence, of the agricultural interest there is the best security for liberty and law."

With the exception of touching upon agricultural topics, Lord Beaconsfield confined himself during this year to questions relating entirely to the development of his foreign policy. Upon one subject, however, of some domestic importance he made a few remarks, which, considering that the agitation

is ever being set on foot, are worthy of being preserved. The question as to the observance of Sunday admits much that can be said on both sides. It is undoubtedly narrow and intolerant to expect that the working man, engaged in close and severe toil, and often in an unhealthy atmosphere, during six long days in the week, should on the seventh be debarred, by a spirit of unkindly Puritanism, from all relaxation and recreation. At the same time the seventh day should be one of rest, and however genial and philanthropic may be the intentions of those who seek to relieve the English Sunday from much of its aggressive and unnecessary austerity, this insertion of the thin end of the wedge is not unaccompanied with danger. Of the two evils it is better both for man and beast that we keep our day of rest as we now keep it, than that that day should develop into the Sunday of the Continent. To the wise and well-balanced mind the day of rest will always be regarded as a divine gift to man to be hallowed and yet to be enjoyed —a sacred day, and yet one on which legitimate pleasure is not to be forbidden. Still we do not legislate for the wise and well balanced, but for the rude and easily led; the middle course between Calvinism and Continentalism, which so many kindly and tolerant persons wish to see adopted, would, if it once came into effect, soon blend and lose itself with extravagances and results which could only be pernicious to the moral welfare of the commonwealth. The opening of galleries and museums would shortly be followed by the opening of other and more popular places of resort; from sacred music we should get to secular music, and from secular music the interval would soon be bridged over which leads to the opening of the opera house and the theatre; our Sunday would speedily lose its sense of rest and repose; it would develop into a day of pure pleasure, of social festivities, and of much gathering together, inspired by the sole object of amusement; finally, it would be a day of much labour to those called upon to satisfy the wants of pleasure-seekers, and as a day of rest—its chief characteristic—it would be null and void. It is for this last reason—the gradual and insidious abolition of a special interval set apart for rest — that the working classes of this country have never regarded with any particular favour the efforts of those who are endeavouring to make the English Sunday less dull and austere. They know what must be the logical result of those efforts, and they prefer to stand upon the old paths. They look forward to their day of rest; it is the one feature in their laborious life which is ever welcome to them, and they are wise enough to see that from the opening of schools of art to the opening of shops is not so distant a step as some imagine. It was this development of the question, and not the mere opening of galleries and museums, that caused Lord Beaconsfield to oppose any motion which was calculated to interfere with the sanctity of the rest expected and required from that hallowed day. On the occasion of Lord Thurlow moving a resolution to open museums and art galleries on Sundays, Lord Beaconsfield thus expressed the views which led him to vote against the proposal:—

"Unquestionably," he said (May 5, 1879), "the resolution moved by the noble lord needs greater consideration than would appear on the surface. There is no doubt it is desirable, that the working classes of this country should be more familiar with galleries of art and museums of science than they probably are. But it is a wish which I think ought not to be limited to the working classes. There are other classes in the country who would be benefited by a nearer acquaintance than they appear to me to possess with galleries of art and museums of science; and the tendency of our legislation of late years has happily been to bring the population of this country generally, irrespective of class, under the civilizing influence of those institutions—to bring art and science into nearer relation with the general life of the

people. Within these few years public holidays have been established by statute. They have been secured to the people by the action of parliament, and are not dependent upon the will of the church; and there has been, besides, that great revolution in manners known as the half-Saturday movement—a revolution not legislative, but not less powerful, because it is the result of general conviction—whereby you secure fifty-two half holidays in the year. Therefore, since the question now before your lordships was first started, great changes, all favourable to the frequent visiting by the people of this country of galleries of art and museums of science, have occurred.

"The proposal of the noble lord is in favour of a very considerable advance being made from the stage at which we have arrived; and it is impossible to consider that proposal without some reference to the religious feelings of the country. Now, my lords, I would not take an exaggerated view of the circumstances connected with this proposition in that respect. I am perfectly free to admit that there is a difference between the Christian Sunday and the Jewish Sabbath; and I cannot agree with those who would extend to the observance of the Christian Sunday the rules and regulations of the Jewish Sabbath. If there be any who desire to do it, they would utterly fail to accomplish that purpose. But of all divine institutions, I maintain the most divine is that which secures *a day of rest for man.* If there is a consideration connected with this subject which I think ought not to be absent from your lordships' mind on this occasion it is this—Would it have been possible to have secured a day of rest for man *unless it had been connected with the religious sentiment?* To my mind it would have been utterly impossible; and it is the religious principle, which to a certain extent is admitted by all—at least by all classes that have influence and numbers in this country—it is that principle we must take care should not be discarded if we wish to maintain that day of rest which I hold to be the most valuable blessing ever conceded to man. It is the corner-stone of all civilization; and it would be very difficult to estimate what might be the deleterious effects, even upon the health of the people, if there were no cessation from that constant toil and brain-work which must ever characterize a country like this, so advanced in its pursuits and civilization.

"Under these circumstances I have ever hesitated to support propositions which have tended to diminish the observance of the Christian Sunday. Another point which ought to influence our decision is this—In all questions into which the religious sentiment enters, it is highly desirable that no change should be effected that is not called for *by the expression of a predominant sentiment on the part of the people.* What evidence have we of this predominance? I ask really as much for instruction as for any other object. I have endeavoured to obtain some information, and that information has not convinced me that there is such a predominance of opinion in favour of this great change. It is a great change; and those who suppose for a moment it can be *limited to the proposal of the noble lord will find they are mistaken.* I want to know what evidence we have that there is this desire on the part of the people of this country for a change which will affect the conduct of their lives, and to a great degree their opinions on the most important and solemn subjects? I venture to refer to the proceedings in the other House of parliament, the popular branch of the legislature. This is not an old subject; as a public question it has come into prominence only within the last few years. I remember the first occasion on which it was brought forward in the other House of parliament. The experiment has been made three or four times, and it has been made so recently as during the

existence of the present government. If I am not mistaken it was made during the last year I sat in the other House. What has been the principal feature of those discussions, debates, and divisions? Unquestionably this—that the proposal has always been defeated by vast majorities, and in those majorities you generally could observe the members for the great commercial towns and the great centres of industry always voting against the proposition.

"These are grave circumstances—though I do not say they ought to be decisive. I do not say that the question the noble lord has brought forward is not one that deserves our consideration. But we ought to bear in mind that *the proposal cannot rest where it is.* I do not speak of the 'thin end of the wedge,' which has been denounced; I do not speak at all in that sense. I say it is in the nature of things that the proposition which the noble lord has made must be followed by others; and the question will be the change in the habits of the people, and perhaps in their opinions, the further the matter is pursued. As a mere matter of politics any substantial or considerable change in the legislation which secures a day of weekly rest to the people of this country should be, I will not say viewed with the greatest suspicion, but examined with the greatest vigilance. I believe this proposed change is viewed with suspicion by the working classes. Whether it is just or not, I will not discuss; but if such a feeling is entertained by the labouring classes of this country, it ought to be tenderly treated. I do not think your lordships ought to make any movement in the direction proposed unless you have good assurance you are taking a course with which the great body of the people of the country sympathize. No evidence has been given which convinces me of that; and therefore it is my duty to oppose a motion—and I do it with regret—the apparent and—I say it not offensively—the superficial object of which would seem to be to civilize the people."

The resolution of Lord Thurlow was rejected by a majority of eight.

CHAPTER XVII.

"IMPERIUM ET LIBERTAS."

For the first time since the passing of the reform bill of 1832 the Tory party had been in power with a large and tractable majority. The constitutional views which the prime minister had long entertained, and which are visible in all his speeches and woven with the texture of his novels, he had proceeded to assert and carry out. What his enemies called a "bastard imperialism," but what he more correctly designed as reducing the constitution to its original elements before it had been restricted by Whig tyranny or overwhelmed by the democratic influx in the House of Commons, had been the object both of his European and Asiatic foreign policy. His aim had been to restore the influence the crown possessed before its usurpation by the members of the "Venetian oligarchy" for their own selfish ends. He wished, as he said, to see "a real throne" exercising its legitimate and constitutional control, emancipated on the one hand from aristocratic despotism, and on the other from parliamentary arrogance. Since government by parliament had superseded government by prerogative, it was not the crown which had encroached upon the rights of the subject, but the subject which had encroached upon the rights of the crown. These encroachments Lord Beaconsfield, now that he was in power, had declined to sanction or admit. Parliament was assembled for counsel, not for control; but since Whig influence had been paramount the Houses under the guidance of the "governing families" had trespassed upon the constitutional prerogatives of the crown, and had wielded the authority which was the due of the sovereign. This reversion of the constitutional order of things Lord Beaconsfield had aimed at setting aside. It had been his object to restore the crown to its original power—to see it govern through ministers responsible to parliament—and not to have it dictated to by a domineering oligarchy ruling ministers by the aid of a submissive House of Commons. It was for this reason that, during the six years he held office, he had proved that the head of a constitutional monarchy was no mere puppet made to act as ministers pulled the strings, but an actual and practical sovereign. The aim he set before him was very similar to that which Baron Stockmar, the confidential adviser of the Prince Consort, had laid down as the rule of conduct which an English sovereign ought to follow.

"Since the theory of the constitution," writes the Baron, "has been brought more into harmony with the spirit and the wants of the age, its practical working has retrograded just as much as its theory has advanced. Whigs and Tories saw that, from the moment the democratic element became so powerful, there was only one thing which could keep this element within safe bounds, and prevent it from swallowing up first the aristocracy, and then itself. This one thing was the upholding and strengthening of the autonomy of the monarchical element, which the fundamental idea of the English constitution had from the first conceded to royalty. . . . In reference to the crown the secret is simply this. Since 1830 the executive power has been entirely in the hands of the ministry, and these being more the servants of parliament—particularly of the House of Commons—than of the crown, it is practically in the hands of that House. This is a distortion of the fundamental idea of the

English constitution, which could not fail to grow by degrees out of the incapacity of her sovereigns rightly to understand and to deal with their position, and out of the encroachments on their privileges by the House of Commons. This perversion of the fundamental idea of the English constitution is fraught with this great mischief for the state, that the head of the ministry for a time can only be the head of a party, and consequently must only too often succumb to the temptation of advancing the imagined interests of his party to the prejudice of the public weal. To counteract on the part of the crown this injurious tendency must at the present moment be a difficult task, *inasmuch as ministers and parliament will construe the legal powers of the crown in accordance, not with the original spirit of the constitution, but with the practice which has prevailed since* 1830. Still, the right of the crown to assert itself as permanent head of the council over the temporary leader of the ministry, and to act as such, is not likely to be gainsaid even by those who regard it through the spectacles of party.

"In theory one of the first duties of ministers is to *protect and preserve intact the traditional usages of royal prerogative.* . . . Our Whigs, again, are nothing but partly conscious, partly unconscious republicans, who stand in the same relation to the throne as the wolf does to the lamb. And these Whigs must have a natural inclination to push to extremity the constitutional fiction—which, although undoubtedly of old standing, is fraught with danger—that it is unconstitutional to introduce and make use of the name and person of the irresponsible sovereign in the public debates on matters bearing on the constitution. But if the English crown permit a Whig ministry to follow this rule in practice, without exception, you must not wonder if in a little time you find the majority of the people impressed with the belief *that the king, in the view of the law, is nothing but a mandarin figure, which has to nod its head in assent, or shake it in denial, as the minister pleases.* . . . Ministerial responsibility in these days, for such ministers as are incapable, and at any rate for such as are unscrupulous, is a mere bugbear. The responsible minister may do the most stupid and mischievous things. If they are not found out he may even continue to be popular; if they do come to light, it only costs him his place. He resigns or is removed—that is all—the whole punishment, the whole restitution made, for the mischief done to the common weal. But who could have averted, whose duty was it to avert, the danger, either wholly or in part? Assuredly he, and he alone, who, being free from party passion, has listened to the voice of an independent judgment. To exercise this judgment is, both in a moral and constitutional point of view, a matter of right, nay, a positive duty. The sovereign may even take a part in the initiation and maturing of the government measures; for it would be unreasonable to expect that a king, himself as able, as accomplished, as patriotic as the best of his ministers, should be prevented from making use of these qualities at the deliberations of his council. In practice, of course, the use so made will be as various as the gifts and personal character of the occupants of the throne are various; and these are decided not merely by the different degrees of capability, but also by their varieties of temperament and disposition. Although the right has, since the time of William III., been frequently perverted and exercised in the most pernicious way, since 1830, on the other hand, it has scarcely been exercised at all, which is fundamentally less injurious to the state than in the other case. At the same time it is obvious that its judicious exercise, which certainly requires a master mind, would not only be the best guarantee for constitutional monarchy, but would raise it to a height of power, stability, and symmetry which has never been attained. At the same time, in the face of the exercise of this merely moral right of the crown, the

responsible ministers may, so far as the substantial import, the excellence, and fitness of their measures are concerned, act with entire freedom and independence. The relation between sovereign and ministers becomes quite different whenever the former has to decide as to the carrying out of a measure which he has already sanctioned; for then he is primarily charged with a constitutional control of the honesty and loyalty of his ministers, which is exercised most safely for the rest of them through the premier. Thus, then, do I vindicate for *the sovereign the position of a permanent premier, who takes rank above the temporary head of the cabinet, and in matters of discipline exercises supreme authority.*"

Without any invasion of the rights of the constitution, Lord Beaconsfield strove to carry out this policy. The queen was to be the real chief of the state, and not the mere agent of her advisers. The authority of the crown, which had lain so long dormant, was to be brought forward and exercised, and thus made to counteract the influence of the leaders of democracy, always working within every state. A real throne, with the sovereign as "permanent premier," with the princes of the blood issuing from their seclusion to hold high office in the state, with a generous aristocracy upholding the influence of the crown, and not like the Whigs upholding only their own order, and a parliament suggestive, yet submissive—these were the ends which the "imperialism" of Lord Beaconsfield sought to attain, and which were the main characteristics of his period of office.

This policy of "imperialism" was, however, warmly opposed by the leaders of the Liberal party. In their eyes England had little or nothing to do with continental politics; it was absurd for us, they said, to attempt to become a great military power, or hope to exercise a powerful influence in the councils of Europe; whilst our jealousy of Russia, our entering into guarantees for the maintenance of the Ottoman empire, our hankering after annexation of territory and rectification of frontiers, simply entailed upon us great expenditure and enormous responsibilities. Why could not ministers, they asked, be content with the foreign policy of their predecessors, under which the country had flourished and had been at peace with its neighbours? Why all this "swagger" and "bluster" and this "jingoism," which really signified nothing but bravado? "We can have no confidence in the future," cried Mr. Rylands, when mourning over the necessary increase in the expenditure, "so long as the imperial policy of the present government exists." "Since this government," said Mr. Bright, "came into office, your great empire upon the map has grown much greater. They have annexed the country in the Transvaal, in South Africa, which is said to be as large as France; they have annexed Zululand, in South Africa; and they have practically annexed Afghanistan. They have added also to our dominions the isle of Cyprus, in the Mediterranean, and they have incurred enormous and incalculable responsibilities in Egypt and Asia Minor. All this adds to your burdens. Just listen to this; they add to the burdens, not of the empire—Canada and Australia and all those colonies have nothing to do, as a rule, with these things—they add to the burdens, not of the empire, but of 33,000,000 of people who inhabit Great Britain and Ireland. We take the burden and pay the charge. This policy may lend a seeming glory to the crown, and may give scope for patronage and promotion, and pay a pension to a limited and a favoured class. But to you, the people, it brings expenditure of blood and of treasure, increased debts and taxes, and adds risk of war in every part of the globe. Now, look at our position for one moment: you have to meet the competition of other countries. Your own race on the American continent are your foremost rivals. Now, nobody denies that statement. I believe they are 50,000,000 now. Happily for them they have not yet bred a Beaconsfield or a Salisbury to misdirect their policy

and waste their resources. Now, if at some distant period—it may be centuries remote—an Englishman, one of that great English nation which is now so rapidly peopling the American continent, if such an Englishman should visit and explore the source of his race and the decayed and ruined home of his fathers, he may exclaim, 'How are the mighty fallen!' and 'whence comes this ruin?' and the answer will be—'In the councils of the England of the past.' I pray that it may not be said in the days of a virtuous queen that wisdom and justice were scorned, and ignorance, passion, and vain-glory directed her policy and wielded her power."

Mr. Gladstone was still more hostile. "I held before, as I have held in the House of Commons, that the faith and honour of the country have been gravely compromised in the foreign policy of the ministry; that by the disturbance of confidence, and lately even of peace, which they have brought about, they have prolonged and aggravated the public distress; that they have augmented the power and influence of the Russian empire, even while estranging the feelings of its population; that they have embarked the crown and people in an unjust war—the Afghan war, that is full of mischief if not of positive danger to India; that by their use of the treaty-making and war-making powers of the crown they have abridged the just rights of parliament, and have presented the prerogative of the nation under an unconstitutional aspect which tends to make it insecure." The key-note thus struck by the leaders of the Liberals was sounded throughout the country with less eloquence, but with equal monotony, by their followers.

These severe but somewhat partial critics of the foreign policy of the government forgot, however, to state that since Great Britain was not merely a cluster of islands in a northern sea, but an empire, it must necessarily have an imperial, and not an insular policy. They forgot to explain that the boasted prosperity which the country enjoyed under the late administration had been bought at the expense of the prestige of the nation, and that the country was at peace with its neighbours simply because it had on the Continent been completely ignored as one of the great powers. They declined to remember that, when the Liberals held office, guarantees which had been solemnly entered into had been renounced, that the judgments of foreign nations had been meekly acquiesced in, and that we had to go back to the worst days of the "Merry Monarch" to find a parallel for our condition as a country degraded, spiritless, pliant, and submissive. Our aim, when ruled by a Liberal administration, was not to be a kingdom, but to be an active and lucrative workshop. Under Mr. Gladstone we were an emporium; under Lord Beaconsfield we were an empire. It was Lord Beaconsfield who raised England to the position she once occupied, who taught Europe to respect and recognize her authority, who showed that treaties in which her interests were concerned could not be drawn up and entered into without her sanction or interposition, and who proved by her decided and patriotic attitude that from those who ignored her or rejected her counsels she was prepared to demand and enforce a full and complete satisfaction.

One of the bitterest antagonists whom the foreign policy of Lord Beaconsfield encountered was the Duke of Argyll. His Grace had from the first opposed the attitude which the government had taken up with regard to the Eastern question, and his objections were among the most sweeping and hostile which the royal titles bill, the Berlin treaty, and the rectification of the Afghan frontier had to meet and refute. At the earliest opportunity, when the execution of the treaty of Berlin was discussed in parliament, the Duke of Argyll came forward to pass an adverse judgment on the whole of the Eastern policy of the government. An important debate was thus originated, in which the most prominent among the peers on both sides of the House took part. The Duke of

Argyll laughed at the treaty of Berlin having preserved the independence and integrity of Turkey. He complained of the construction put upon the evacuation of Eastern Roumelia by the government. According to the Berlin treaty, the Russian troops were to have completed the evacuation by May 3, 1879—being the nine months from August 3, 1878, agreed upon; but it now transpired that the evacuation was only to begin on that date. The duke then ridiculed the pretensions of the government as to the advantages to be derived from the treaty of Berlin, which was nothing, he declared, but the treaty of San Stefano drawn afresh with a few unimportant modifications. The first result of the policy of the government was that Turkey was ruined. "Do not deceive yourselves with fine phrases," he cried; "Turkey as an empire is dead and gone. She has lost more than provinces—she has lost that which is essential to empire; she has lost her independence." Passing on to the subject of Afghanistan, and to the treaty of Gandamuk, which was then being considered by the cabinet, he accused the government of double dealing with Shere Ali, and opposed the view of the ministers that India should be saddled with the expenses of the campaign. "My lords," he concluded, "you are beginning to be found out. The people of this country—or at least that portion of the country on which you have relied—are beginning to see that you have not obtained for them what they expected. It is not we, the members of the Opposition, who are accusing you. Time is your great accuser; the course of events is summing up the case against you. What have you to say—I shall wait to hear—what have you to say why you should not receive an adverse verdict at the hands of your country, as you certainly will be called up for judgment at the bar of history?"

His Grace had not long to wait before he heard the defence of the government. Lord Beaconsfield rose up at once to reply. He had expressed a hope the day before that as the treaty of Gandamuk was under consideration, the Opposition would not criticise at the present moment the policy of the government in Afghanistan. "My lords," he said (May 16, 1879), alluding to the arrival of Yakub Khan in the English camp at Gandamuk, "My lords, you are aware, as the noble duke has just reminded you, that at this moment the Ameer of Afghanistan is a self-invited but honoured guest in the English camp, with the avowed object of negotiating a treaty of peace and friendship with the Queen of England; and I may say that under those circumstances, when I heard of the intended motion of the noble duke, and that he was going to call the attention of the House to the results of our foreign policy in Europe and Asia, I think I had some reason yesterday to remind him of that state of affairs to which I have referred, and to leave it with confidence to his discretion, as I left it then, to observe a statesmanlike silence in the circumstances now existing. My lords, I have been deeply disappointed in these expectations. At this very moment, when the questions to which he has referred, such as the appointment of a European resident in the cities of that sovereign, when those questions are still under consideration, and which at this very moment are the subject of negotiations, the noble duke has thought it proper, referring, as he said, only to the past, to treat these subjects in a manner—and in a manner which, in the present conditions of communication, may in twenty-four hours be known in those parts—which certainly may greatly affect the carriage of these negotiations. When I consider these circumstances, when I remember the position of the noble duke, a man of eminence for his ability and so exalted in his position, a man who has more than once been the trusted counsellor of his sovereign, when I see that such a man as he comes forward, and with a criticism which I will not call malevolent, but which certainly was envenomed, attacks the policy of the government which at this moment must be being weighed and scanned with the most intense

interest abroad, I must say that I am greatly astonished. My parliamentary experience has not been little, but certainly in the course of that experience I remember no similar instance of a person in so high a position adopting the course which the noble duke has thought it right to take.

"For the reasons which I gave yesterday I shall certainly not follow the noble duke into the subject to which he has referred. My noble friend, when he addresses your lordships, will find that, although for the moment he may have to sacrifice the gratification of vindicating his personal honour, there are still various matters with respect to Afghanistan to which the noble duke has referred, to which it is necessary for him to allude. I, however, shall not touch upon them. Unfortunately for us, and perhaps still more unfortunately for the noble duke himself, he was not present when the debates in reference to Afghanistan were held. Those of your lordships who were present at those debates can scarcely accept as accurate the picture which the noble duke drew of those discussions. Your lordships have been told by the noble duke that you were obliged to consent to a hurried vote, moved by Her Majesty's government, who had already committed the country to a certain policy with regard to Afghanistan. Your lordships will recollect that, on the contrary, the subject of the conduct of Her Majesty's government in reference to Afghanistan was discussed for three nights in this House. Your lordships will also remember that with your indulgence I felt it to be my duty to wind up the debate upon that occasion, and that, after our policy had been criticised and assailed for three nights, I proved by the production of a despatch written by the late Viceroy of India that if the distinguished leaders of the Opposition had been in office, they would have pursued exactly the same policy which we conceived and which we had the courage to pursue. The result of that debate was, that when the matter came to a division, one of the largest majorities which we have ever had in this House sealed with its confidence and its approbation the conduct of Her Majesty's government.

"I will endeavour to follow the noble duke through the other subjects which he dealt with, in the order in which he introduced them. The noble duke, as some compensation for the attack which he made upon our Indian policy, commenced his address by congratulating us. The noble duke congratulated us upon the great fact that, in part fulfilment of the treaty of Berlin, the evacuation of Bosnia and Roumania had been commenced. The noble duke in congratulating us on that circumstance said, that it was true at the same time that the version which we now gave of the obligatory provision in the treaty of Berlin respecting the evacuation of those provinces was not that which we had originally given of it; still that the fact that the evacuation had commenced was so satisfactory, that he must congratulate us upon our success in bringing about an agreement under which Russia was to be allowed three more months in which to complete the evacuation. I cannot accept the compliments of the noble duke. I have always placed upon the 22nd clause of the treaty of Berlin exactly the same interpretation which I understand the government of Russia now does. My noble friend and myself, who have worked together in these transactions, have, I believe, never differed upon any single point in reference to the treaty except this; I certainly understood that when nine months were appointed for the occupation of these provinces by the military forces of Russia, that period should not include the time allowed for the evacuation of them, which was to commence at the termination of that period of nine months. Occupation and evacuation are different things; and if the evacuation were to be commenced within the nine months, the period of the occupation would be proportionately shortened.

"But, holding as I do that view of the subject, that is no reason why we should agree to an unreasonable length of time being taken in conducting the evacuation of those provinces. The noble duke treated as a matter of course, and as a subject upon which there could be no possible difference of opinion, that Her Majesty's government had agreed to extend the time for the evacuation in those provinces to August 3. There is not the slightest authority for any statement of the kind. What we are bound by is the view now taken by the majority of the signatories of the Berlin treaty, to the effect that the evacuation was to commence on May 3; and it is to be completed within a reasonable time, which may be computed in weeks rather than in months, but at all events in a moderate time, as compared with the statement which the noble duke has made. Therefore the noble duke, who prides himself upon his memory, has actually complimented Her Majesty's government upon the circumstances which, if correct, would have been a disgrace to them.

"The noble duke then goes on to complain very much of the manner in which he and his colleagues and friends have been treated not in, but out of this House, and in so doing he exhibited that sensitiveness which I have already more than once observed is peculiar to the present Opposition. On this point I did not think that the evidence of the noble duke was adequate to the occasion. He quoted an extract from a speech of my noble friend, and he also quoted from the anonymous correspondence of an unknown society. When a subject of this character is brought before your lordships on a solemn occasion, and when charges of this nature are made against Her Majesty's government, I do not myself much care what people say about me, and I have not much time to make remarks about others. Some distinguished members of Her Majesty's Opposition, however, who have appeared in different parts of the country, seem to have spared no time in the preparation of their attacks upon Her Majesty's government. Upon that subject I will say nothing further than this: I make no charge against either of the two noble lords, the leaders of the Opposition in either House of Parliament. Their conduct has at all times, and especially at critical periods, been such as was to be expected from gentlemen and distinguished statesmen who felt the responsibilities of their position.

"That, however, cannot be said of all the members of the party. Although I shall notice nothing of a merely personal nature, I must say that it is much to be regretted that after so solemn an act as the treaty of Berlin was executed, and when united Europe had agreed to look upon the treaty as some assurance for the maintenance of peace and for the general welfare of the world, certain members of the Opposition should, not once, twice, nor thrice, but month after month, habitually declare to the world that the treaty was utterly impracticable, and have used such external influence as they might possess to throw every obstacle and impediment in the way of carrying that treaty into practical effect. Look at the probable result of such action. If statesmen have pledged their opinion over and over again that a treaty is impracticable, if they become responsible ministers, they will be called upon by those who do not wish the treaty to be fulfilled to carry their opinions into effect.

"Then says the noble duke, 'I come now to business. You have negotiated a treaty, but what have you done for Turkey?' And the noble duke for a considerable time—for more than half an hour—made an impassioned appeal to the House, with a view of showing us what ought to have been done for Turkey. From a minister responsible, I believe, for the Crimean War, such a speech might have been expected, and, in fact, the strongest part of the oration of the noble duke was an impassioned argument in favour of going to war with Russia

in order to preserve the settlement made at the end of the Crimean War. 'Well,' says the noble duke, 'what have you done? See the losses to Turkey which you have brought about. There is Batoum, a most valuable harbour, which will be fortified by the Russians whatever may be the engagement they have made by the treaty of Berlin. Do you mean to say, if you had acted with sufficient vigour, that you could not have prevented Russia taking Batoum, with your great fleet in the Black Sea?' Well, no doubt we could have prevented Russia taking Batoum, as we prevented Russia taking Constantinople. But is the noble duke prepared, or was he prepared, to go to war to prevent Russia taking Batoum—a port which with derision the noble duke describes as one which Russia has made a free port. But the noble duke quite forgot to say that it was not only made by the treaty of Berlin a free port, but a port essentially commercial—words which have some meaning and by which the signatories of the treaty of Berlin will always be bound. The noble lord says also, 'I can see what will happen in Batoum. It will be a free port, but a fortified one. It will be a strong place and will control the commerce of Persia.' But all this was said of the treaties of 1828 with regard to the harbour of Poti. The very same expression was used, and England was warned that by obtaining the harbour of Poti Russia had obtained such a commanding position that the Black Sea would be entirely at her mercy. The noble duke quite forgot to tell us this, that under the treaty of Berlin the finest port in the Black Sea, the port of Burgas, was restored to the Sultan. This the noble duke, who is so candid, omitted to bring to your lordships' recollection.

"'Well,' then says the noble duke, 'how can you reconcile yourselves to the fact that you have agreed to the destruction of the Danubian fortresses—that Quadrilateral of the East which would have commanded the Danube?' One would suppose, from the way in which the noble duke has spoken to-night, that there had never been any war between Russia and Turkey. One would suppose that Turkey had never been utterly vanquished, and that the army of Russia had never been at the gates of Constantinople. Surely the claims of Russia, whether right or wrong, had to be considered. However we might approve or disapprove the *casus belli* and the policy of the war—whatever differences of opinion there might be upon these and similar points—no one could deny for a moment that Russia had completely vanquished Turkey; and to suppose in these circumstances that everything was to be left exactly in the same position as at the beginning of the war, is an assumption which I think your lordships will agree is not a very reasonable one. But look at the merits of the case. These fortresses, under the new system, would have become Bulgarian fortresses, our policy being to maintain the Turkish empire—a policy, allow me in passing to remind your lordships, which is universal in Europe, because every one of the great powers who have signed the treaty of Berlin agreed in this one point, that there was no substitute for the Turkish power, and that that power, though it might be reduced, should still be substantially maintained. 'But,' says the noble duke, 'the proposal to destroy these fortresses was made by the Russians themselves.' It matters little, but I believe the noble duke is inaccurate in that respect. The proposal to destroy the fortresses of the Quadrilateral was not a new one. It had been made on previous occasions, and it was always put forward by Russia in order to show that the Russians themselves did not wish to obtain these powerful strongholds.

"Then says the noble duke, 'You have by the treaty of Berlin, which is but a revised edition of the treaty of San Stefano established Servia as an independent state and increased its territory!' But the

situation of Servia before the war with reference to its connection with the Porte was one of virtual independence. The Porte certainly was the suzerain, and possessed a claim to a very small tribute; but it was in reality a nominal one, for it was never paid. To pretend that the public acknowledgment of the independence of Servia was a great blow to the Turkish power, which it was our policy to maintain, is really trifling with so serious a subject as that which is now before your lordships. Fourthly, the noble duke says that we have deluded the people, who are, according to him, so easily deceived by the arrangement made concerning Roumelia. The Sultan, according to the noble duke, has no more to do with Roumelia than he has with Roumania itself. But the noble duke forgets the fact that by the treaty of Berlin the political and military authority of the Sultan is not only asserted, but secured.

"It is not simply that he has the right of occupying the Balkan chain; nor is it simply that he has the power of occupying Burgas, the most important port in the Black Sea. Although we have secured autonomy for Roumelia, and although the Sultan has not yet the blessing of the scheme of local government, which I trust will soon be tried, and which apparently, so far as I can judge, is admirably adapted to the circumstances of the case, his political authority is still asserted. The noble duke forgets the conditions in accordance with which all the officers of the militia and *gendarmerie* must be appointed by the Sultan. Well, these are the different points by which the noble duke has endeavoured to show, that as regards the settlement of Berlin, the interests of Turkey and of the Sultan have been neglected and injured by Her Majesty's government. My lords, when the noble duke first gave notice, his intention was to call the attention of the House to the results of the foreign policy of Her Majesty's government in Europe and Asia. Well, yesterday we heard from the noble duke that he would not trench upon the future. But how you are to judge of a policy if you are not to treat of the future which will be the result of that policy, I really find some difficulty in ascertaining.

"Let us take a larger and more candid view than the noble duke has taken of those important matters of four years' duration in the East. What led to this treaty of Berlin? It was four years ago, the noble duke reminds us, when certain desires first arose among the border populations of Turkey in Europe. After two months of disaster, during which there were communications between the powers, there came the famous instrument called the Andrassy Note. That was in December, 1875, and was the commencement of those diplomatic campaigns and wars. I am sure your lordships do not wish to hear much about the Andrassy Note, but I believe the noble duke has completely misapprehended the whole situation—the conduct of Her Majesty's government and the principles on which their policy was established. The Andrassy Note was the very elaborate proposition of a mode of ameliorating the subject populations in European Turkey. Well, the first feeling of Her Majesty's government was not to accept that note. They remembered their engagements under the treaty of Paris, and they knew the danger which might occur from again disturbing the settlement then made. But, my lords, when we investigated that document, we found really that the Porte was not called upon to make any concession or to enter into any engagement which they had not by previous *irades* themselves undertaken to concede and to act upon. Well, it is impossible that our fear of contributing to the disturbances in Europe might have prevented our even then acceding to that note. But I remember it was at the solicitation of the Porte itself, when it heard that there was a possibility of England holding out, that we ultimately acceded.

"I believe, my lords, that after the Andrassy Note there was a *bonâ fide* attempt

on the part of the Porte to meet the difficulties of the case. But consider what were the conditions of affairs at that moment. Those disturbances were in the border provinces of the Turkish dominions. The central power was wonderfully relaxed. The provincial administration was incompetent and corrupt. The chiefs in the mountain districts were always at civil war and plundering their neighbours who did not resist them, and in this state of affairs it was that we thought some decided action should be taken; and after a few months a proposition was made in the form of the famous Berlin Memorandum, which if we had agreed to we should then have joined the other Powers in, in fact, making war upon Turkey. We refused to do that, and parliament and the country entirely sanctioned the policy we then pursued in declining to accept the Berlin Memorandum. My lords, almost simultaneously with the introduction of the Berlin Memorandum there occurred the assassination of the European consuls at Salonica. Soon afterwards there was a revolution in Constantinople, the deposition of the sovereign by force, and other circumstances of the most painful nature, which I need not recall to the recollection of your lordships. Well, after this came the Bulgarian insurrection, and after that the Servian declaration of war against Turkey, which ended in the complete defeat of Servia by Turkey.

"Then what did Her Majesty's government do? It was at that time when Russia, having interfered in consequence of the prostrate state of Servia with her *ultimatum*, and by her menace forced Turkey to make peace, or grant an armistice equivalent to peace with Servia—it was then that Her Majesty's government came forward with a proposition which became celebrated, and that was to establish autonomy in those provinces which had been so long the scene and theatre of this reckless misgovernment. And then the noble duke says that our conduct has been such that we have necessarily lost the affections and confidence of the then subject races of Turkey. My lords, it was my noble friend on the cross-benches [Lord Derby] who had the honour of making these distinct propositions with regard to Bosnia and Herzegovina which were ultimately to be applied to Bulgaria. And let me remind the noble duke, who speaks of us as on all occasions neglecting the interests and not sympathizing with the fortunes of the Christian races, that we were the first government that laid down the principle that the chief remedy for this miserable state of affairs was the introduction of a large system of self-government, and above all of the principle of civil and religious liberty.

"My lords, I am obliged, on an occasion like the present, to very much curtail remarks which I would wish to place before you; but it is necessary after the speech of the noble duke that I should remove impressions which are absolutely unfounded, that I should recall to your recollection what are the principles on which the policy of Her Majesty's government is founded, and show your lordships that the noble duke has entirely mistaken that policy. I must point out that the noble duke has imputed to us motives which we never acknowledged, and conduct and feelings toward others which we never shared. Now, has there been any inconsistency in our policy? When war between Russia and Turkey was so imminent that it was a question of hours, my noble friend upon the cross-benches proposed that there should be a conference at Constantinople, at which my noble friend near me should be our plenipotentiary. Has the noble duke, who studies these matters, who not only makes long speeches, but writes long books about them, has the noble duke ever heard, or has he forgotten the instructions given to my noble friend near me by my noble friend on the cross-benches — instructions as to the course he was to pursue at the conference at Constantinople?

"I cannot, my lords, venture to refer to

those instructions which lie before me, at any length; but I may remind you of some of their salient points. In one paragraph my noble friend was instructed that it became requisite in the then crisis to take steps by an agreement between the powers for the establishment of reform in the Turkish provinces which would combine the elective principle with external guarantees for efficient administration. Then the means are indicated by which that state of things might be brought about. Well, my lords, that is but a specimen to show the purport of those instructions, which completely mastered the application of the principle of autonomy; and no government in Europe at this conference was so ready, so prepared, or so practical in its propositions by which the welfare of the subject races and a general reform of the administration of Turkey could be affected as was the government of England, so represented at the conference by my noble friend. And yet the noble duke comes down here and makes an inflammatory harangue, and speaks of the deplorable consequences which he fears will arise—that we have lost for ever the confidence and affection of the subject races of Turkey by our utter disregard of their feelings and neglect of their interests. Why, my lords, if I were to read to you this minute of my noble friend near me of the proposition which he himself made as regards Montenegro, Servia, the two principalities Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Bulgaria, and the reforms that might be established in all the provinces of Turkey, you would see that at the conference of Constantinople he endeavoured to have carried into effect as much as he possibly could the policy of autonomy which had been laid down in the instructions prepared by my noble friend on the cross-benches.

"Well, my lords, you know very well what occurred. We failed—not England only, but Europe—failed in preventing war. Our objects were twofold. We wished to maintain Turkey as an independent political state. It is very easy to talk of the Ottoman power being at the point of extinction. But when you come practically to examine the question there is no living statesman who has ever offered or propounded any practical solution of the difficulties which would occur if the Ottoman empire were to fall to pieces. One result would probably be a long and general war, and that alone, I think, is a sufficient reason for endeavouring to maintain as a state the Ottoman empire. But, while holding as a principle that the Ottoman empire must be maintained as a state, we have always been of opinion that the only way to strengthen it was to improve the condition of its subjects. My lords, I do not say this out of vague philanthropy, or any of that wild sentimentalism which is vomited in the society which is sometimes called political. No, my lords, it was our conviction that that was the only means by which the maintenance of the Ottoman empire could be secured; and we have acted accordingly.

"Until the war commenced we consistently endeavoured—first, to prevent war, and secondly, to ameliorate the condition of the subject races of the Porte; and when the war took place we determined that when peace was negotiated it should not be negotiated without the knowledge and sanction of Great Britain. We are told, my lords, that the treaty of Berlin did nothing for the Sultan. Looking to the first object of our policy, which was the maintenance of the Sultan, let me show what our signature to the treaty of Berlin produced as regards the political position. Bulgaria was confined to the north of the Balkans instead of the arrangement that was made under the treaty of San Stefano; Thrace, Macedonia, and the littoral of the Ægean were restored to the Sultan; the Slav principalities of Servia and Montenegro were restricted within reasonable limits; the disturbed districts of Bosnia and Herzegovina were placed under the administration of Austria, which was

thus offered as a barrier to Slav aggression; and Eastern Roumelia was created with an organic statute which, if wisely accepted by the people of that province, would make them one of the most prosperous communities in the world. The noble duke tells us that the treaty of Berlin is a political imposture, and that we are found out. Let me place before your lordships very briefly what was the state of affairs effected by the treaty of San Stefano, and what was the state of affairs effected by the treaty of Berlin; remembering that the noble duke dinned into our ears that the treaty of Berlin was only a copy of the treaty of San Stefano.

"At the time the treaty of San Stefano was signed, or immediately before it was signed, the Russian armies were at the gates of Constantinople. They occupied the greater part of the east and north of European Turkey. A vast Slav state was to stretch from the Danube to the Ægean shores, extending inwards from Salonica to the mountains of Albania—a state which when formed would have crushed the Greek population, exterminated the Mussulmans, and exercised over the celebrated Straits, that have so long been the scene of political interest, the baneful and irresistible influence of the Slavs. That was the state of affairs when the treaty of San Stefano was signed, and the British government, with great difficulty but with equal determination, succeeded in having that treaty submitted to the consideration of the congress—the congress of Berlin. And what were the results of that congress? I have placed before your lordships the main features of the settlement of San Stefano. Let me now place before your lordships what were the results of the treaty of Berlin. In the first place, the Russian armies quitted their menacing positions at the gates of Constantinople. The city, notwithstanding many promises, was not entered. The Russian armies gradually retired, and at last quitted Adrianople and all that district, and they are now evacuating Bulgaria and Roumelia in consequence of the treaty of Berlin. Bulgaria itself, by the treaty of Berlin, becomes a vassal and tributary province of the Porte. Eastern Roumelia becomes a province governed by an organic statute which secures local representation, provincial administration, civil and religious liberty, and many other conditions and arrangements which it would be wearisome now to enter into, but which some day, and shortly, I am sure your lordships will read with interest.

"The condition of Crete was one of the most unsatisfactory, but it was met by an organic statute which has the sympathy of the whole population. Montenegro, by the treaty of Berlin, got that accession of territory which really was necessary to its existence, and that access to the sea which was necessary to its prosperity. Servia obtained independence by fulfilling the conditions of the congress of Berlin, that the independence of no new state should be acknowledged which did not secure principles of religious liberty in its constitution; and Roumania also would have been equally acknowledged had not difficulties arisen on that subject, which, however, will be overcome, I have reason to believe, and which certainly England, and no doubt the other signatories of the treaty of Berlin, will endeavour to overcome. Well, my lords, I think, after that, it cannot be said that the treaty of Berlin is *a mere copy of the treaty of San Stefano.* I think, after that, it cannot be said that it is not one of those great instruments which in all probability will influence the life of Europe, and possibly have an even more extended influence for a considerable time. I look upon it as an instrument which has in it that principle of evolution which we hear of in other matters equally interesting. I believe it will not only effect the reforms which it has immediately in view, but that it will ultimately tend to the general welfare of mankind.

"The noble duke laughs at the idea of our effecting any beneficial change in Asia

Minor. Well, my lords, there is nothing difficult or great that is not laughed at in the beginning. The noble duke is not the man whom I should have thought would have discredited the attempt that is making. But nothing has been done in this way, says the noble duke. Well, in the first place, if the noble duke supposes that the regeneration of Asia Minor is to be like the occupation of Bulgaria, an affair of nine weeks, he entertains views of Oriental life and character which I venture to deny. But are there no symptoms of change, and change for the better, even in Asia Minor? I think the fact that an eminent statesman like Midhat Pasha has been recalled from exile and appointed governor of Syria—the first governor appointed for a term of years which cannot be capriciously reduced—is one on which we may congratulate ourselves; and I have reason to believe that the influence of that statesman on his government is great. We must also remember that under the treaty of Berlin there are a variety of commissioners of demarcation settling the boundaries of different states, and so carrying out a work of inestimable value. The noble duke has made a warlike speech. He has told Turkey that she has in us an ally on whom she cannot depend. He has told Russia that she has only to pursue her policy of aggression, and that it will be accepted by the English government. And, as far as I can understand him, the noble duke does not treat with any disapprobation the policy of Russia in that respect.

"Now, I wish to speak in another tone, but a sincere one, in regard to Russia. I think I can, as an English minister, appeal with pride on behalf of my colleagues and myself to the fact, that those great results in regard to the policy which we recommended were, perhaps, not uninfluenced by the presence of a magnificent British fleet, and by the firm tone in which Her Majesty's government communicated with St. Petersburg. Notwithstanding, I willingly acknowledge there has been on the part of Russia a spirit of wise forbearance, and I believe that she is sincerely anxious to bring about in that part of the world which has been the scene of all these disasters and distressing circumstances a state of affairs which, not only for her own sake, but for the sake of all, we should assist her in bringing about. My lords, I have trespassed on your attention, but the noble duke made so serious and so elaborate a charge upon the government that it was impossible for me to be silent. I have not said many things I ought to have said, and I may have said some things which I ought not to have said; but this I know. The noble duke says we are a most powerful government; but, says he, 'If you are a most powerful government, it is only because you are powerful in parliament.' Well, that is a state of affairs which it is very easy to parallel in the history of this country. I know that in Opposition men do indulge in dreams. I have had experience of Opposition, and I hope it has left me, it may be a wiser, even if a sadder man. I know that there are mirages that rise up before the political eye which are extremely delightful and equally deceptive; and I say, knowing of what materials the parliament of England is formed, knowing whom I address now, and knowing who sit in the other House, where I was one of their companions, I cannot but believe that the large majorities which the noble duke has dwelt upon have been accorded to the present government because it was believed they were a government resolved to maintain the fame and strength of England."

Shortly after parliament had risen to enjoy the repose of the recess, sickening news reached our shores from Afghanistan. It will be remembered that, according to the treaty signed at Gandamuk, a British resident was to be appointed at Cabul, with power to depute British agents to the Afghan frontier on special occasions. The officer selected to fill this post was one, Sir Louis Cavagnari, who, as deputy-commissioner of Peshawur, had charge for many

years of relations with the tribes of the Khyber Pass, and who, as confidential adviser of Lord Lytton, had been mainly instrumental in drawing up the treaty of Gandamuk. He was a man of great ability, unbounded energy, and of varied and extensive experience in all affairs connected with Oriental life and diplomacy. Sanguine, courageous, and conscious of the influence he was capable of exercising over the minds of the natives of the East, he felt certain that his residence in Afghanistan would result in the promotion of our imperial interests, and serve as a grave check to Russian manœuvring. Attended by a small escort, and accompanied by a secretary and a surgeon, he reached Cabul in perfect safety, and was received with every sign of respect and cordiality by the Ameer. For a few weeks the relations between the ruler of Afghanistan and the resident were of a friendly and almost intimate nature. Then the Ameer became irritable and jealous, and a certain coldness was apparent in his behaviour. He objected to be interfered with and to have advice tendered him by the resident. He disliked having "the envoy at his elbow to overshadow his authority and to torture him with suggestions of reform." He wanted to "rule Afghanistan in the Afghan way," and not to be dictated to by a foreigner. Actuated by these motives, it was not long before the resident saw that his position in the country was one of danger. Restraints were put upon his reception of visitors; quarrels broke out between the men of his escort and the Afghan soldiers; and the Ameer appeared powerless to quell the disturbances that reigned around.

And now the end came. The mission was composed of the resident, his secretary, a Mr. Jenkins of the Punjab civil service, the surgeon, a Dr. Kelly, and one, Lieutenant Hamilton, in command of the escort, which consisted of twenty-six troopers and fifty infantry of the corps of "Guides." The houses assigned to Cavagnari and his suite were in the Bala Hissar, or citadel of Cabul—very comfortable as quarters, but lacking all defences in case of attack. Early in September some of the disaffected troops of the Ameer came to the palace and demanded their pay. On being refused they at once went to the resident to obtain from him the satisfaction denied them by the Ameer. An altercation arose, which was soon followed by aggressive measures on the part of the Afghans. It was the month of Ramazan, when Mussulman fanaticism was at its height, and the discontented soldiery were soon joined by the mob in the town, inspired by hatred of the infidel or hope of plunder. In vain the English, gallantly aided by their escort, attempted to drive back their assailants. The defenceless citadel was stormed, and the members of the ill-fated mission, rushing out to meet the foe, perished fighting to a man. Of the separate fate of each nothing certain is known.

Their murder was speedily avenged. Preparations were at once made for an advance upon Cabul, and for the infliction of signal punishment upon the mutineers. The Ameer was helpless to check the disaffection rising within his dominions, but what influence he possessed was exercised to facilitate the movements of the British troops. Shortly afterwards he himself came into the camp as a fugitive, and appealed for protection. A month after the massacre of the mission, General Roberts made his formal entry into Cabul. He was received by the inhabitants with sullen respect, and delivered a short address to the people who had assembled beneath the window of the palace in which he had taken his quarters. He said that though the government might justly destroy the city, yet Cabul would in mercy be spared. Certain portions, however, would be levelled, and a heavy fine imposed. The city and the district for ten miles round would be placed under martial law. All arms were to be at once surrendered, and the carrying of weapons was forbidden under penalty of death. A military government would be appointed to

see that these rules were carried out. This address delivered, General Roberts proceeded to prepare quarters for his troops during the winter. The Ameer resigned his rulership, and his abdication was accepted; his absence from the country was considered desirable, and he was sent as a state prisoner into India. A rigid investigation then took place, and those persons who were found guilty of direct participation in the recent massacre of the mission were publicly hanged.

Such was the condition of affairs in the East when Lord Beaconsfield rose to acknowledge the toast of "Her Majesty's ministers," at the banquet on Lord Mayor's day at the Guildhall. He began by alluding to the revival of trade, especially of the iron trade, which was then happily beginning to make itself felt. "Since I last had the honour," he said (November 10, 1879), "of addressing my fellow-citizens in our hall, the aspect of public affairs has become much more satisfactory. At that time the commercial interests of this country were suffering under a period of depression, which in length and severity was almost unprecedented, and there were few a year ago, even among the sanguine, who looked forward to any early recovery in that direction. But at the present moment, I am glad to say, our marts are full and busy, and our exchanges are carrying on a traffic which even three months ago we should have supposed impossible; and the only question now is whether this revival of trade which has occurred is temporary or permanent. That is a question which is interesting to all Englishmen, but especially to the city of London. I hope, therefore, you will pardon me if I venture to offer you the opinion of Her Majesty's government that that revival is of a permanent character. I think the information which only within the last few days has been in your possession may have satisfied the country to that effect. Next to agriculture, the manufacture of iron in all its branches is the most important of our industries. No doubt the revival of that important trade has greatly been owing to the demand of the United States. But the returns which have now been published by the Board of Trade prove to you, that the activity of our iron trade is not occasioned only by the demand of the United States. On the contrary, they show you that the demand for our iron extends to several portions of Europe. Nor is that demand limited to the United States or to Europe. I am happy to say that the miscellaneous demand for our domestic industries is equally active, and especially in the shipbuilding trade.

"If you take another instance—namely, our great commerce with the East—it is a fact at this moment that there has been a demand for every article of tropical produce, and that every article of tropical produce has risen in value. This, so far as England is concerned, has had a most beneficial effect on the price of silver, which has greatly risen. In my opinion it will rise more; and thus one of the perplexities of statesmen has been removed, showing the magic of patience. I would not on this occasion dwell too much on this subject, although the state and prospects of our commerce must always be one of first-rate interest to Englishmen; but I will take one trade, and one trade only, the state of which is usually recognized as significant of the general prosperity of commerce, and that is our manufacture of chemicals. That is a branch of our industry which at this moment is so active that the orders which pour in cannot easily be executed. If, again, we look to the textile trades, we find nothing that is not in harmony with all these circumstances, whether in wool or in cotton; and when we consider the increase of traffic in our railways, the increase of business in the clearing-house of the bankers, and the general hardening of money, I do not think Her Majesty's ministers can be accused of rashness if they have arrived at an opinion that the revival of trade is of a permanent character.

"But in my mind there is one thing per-

haps more satisfactory even than the revival of our commerce, and that is the admirable conduct of the people of this country during these years of terrible trial. The strain on their resources has, perhaps, never been equalled, and yet there has never been a murmur—not of discontent. The voice of sedition has never been heard. There has never been a public meeting to express discontent with the institutions under which the people live. But such has been their good sense, their good feeling, and their patriotism, that they have proved how much they value the institutions under which they live. I wish I could say as much of our brilliant brethren in Ireland. I wish they had proved themselves a little more emulous of the conduct of the English people. The Irish are an imaginative race, and it is said that imagination is too often accompanied by somewhat irregular logic. But I confess I cannot bring myself to comprehend how the Irish people have brought themselves to believe that the best way *to encounter economical distress is political agitation and social confusion.* There is no doubt that there are portions of Ireland where it may be necessary that some means should be applied to avert considerable suffering, and the subject has duly received the attention of Her Majesty's government. But I think Ireland ought to remember that in her distress she has never appealed to the sympathy of England in vain; and that sympathy has generally assumed a very substantial embodiment.* It will be the duty of Her Majesty's government to watch, with the anxiety which the situation requires, the state of those portions of Ireland; but I would venture to hope that the Irish people, convinced on reflection that the sympathy of England is a sentiment which is never scantily supplied to them, will even condescend to recollect that if they have had a bad harvest that harvest is much better than that of England.

* Ireland was at this time in a more than usually turbulent and impoverished condition; an anti-rent agitation was being set on foot, and the cry was raised for state aid.

"My Lord Mayor, when I had last the honour of addressing your predecessor I informed him that Her Majesty's government were contemplating large military operations in Central Asia, with the view of strengthening and securing the north-western frontier of our Indian empire. These operations have been conducted with signal success. We have strengthened and secured our north-western frontier; we have asserted our supremacy in Central Asia; and the general result of our operations will be, I hope, to establish tranquillity in those regions, and increase the welfare of their inhabitants. My Lord Mayor, in that campaign there has been a dark calamity, which even in this scene and at this hour we cannot recall without emotion. A great nation can endure the loss of a pitched battle with dignity and self-control. They may even find consolation under such circumstances in the consciousness of a good cause, and in the heroic acts of their countrymen, though defeated. But calamities that commence with treachery, and are consummated by assassination and massacre—where the victims are youth and genius, unrivalled courage and the highest patriotism—these are the incidents that rend the heart of nations. No time has been lost in avenging the memory of our countrymen, and in asserting the supremacy of our arms; and I must here express the sense of Her Majesty's government of the great abilities of the queen's viceroy of India. I do it the more willingly because, although it is the business of English ministers living among their countrymen to meet hostile criticism and depreciation with the firmness which becomes men, it is to be regretted that one so distant, and on whom such arduous duties have fallen, has been so little spared by hostile criticism in his own land. For my own part, I have rarely met a man in whom genius and sagacity were more happily allied than in Lord Lytton, a man of greater resource, or one possessing in such degree that highest quality of public life—

courage in adversity and firmness and constancy in difficulty and danger.

"My Lord Mayor, there has been another war, which was commenced and has been concluded since we last met. I will not now enter into the controversy whether that war was necessary or not; I will only say that the war occurred; and Her Majesty's government have endeavoured to extract from its occurrence the most advantageous consequences for this country. We have established the security of our colonial fellow-subjects; and while we have poured forth our treasure and our blood to defend them, we have given them a lesson in that art of self-preservation on which they must for the future chiefly rely. At the same time, we are entering into arrangements which will tend, I hope, to the increased welfare of the population among whom they live, and lead probably to the civilizing expansion of our commercial relations.

"My Lord Mayor, with regard to our external affairs generally, although Europe is covered with armed millions of men, we still hope, and I will venture to say believe, that peace will be maintained. We are of that opinion, because it seems to us that peace is the interest of all the great powers. I would not myself place it on so low a consideration as the necessity we all have of husbanding our resources, because I know that the powers of Europe are influenced by motives of a much higher character; but in assuming that peace will be maintained, I assume also that no great power would shrink from its responsibilities. If there be a country, for example, one of the most extensive and wealthiest of empires in the world—if that country, from a perverse interpretation of its insular geographical position, turns an indifferent ear to the feelings and the fortunes of Continental Europe, such a course would, I believe, only end in its becoming an object of general plunder. So long as the power and advice of England are felt in the councils of Europe, peace, I believe, will be maintained, and maintained for a long period. Without their presence, war, as has happened before, and too frequently of late, seems to me to be inevitable. I speak on this subject with confidence to the citizens of London, because I know that they are men who are not ashamed of the empire which their ancestors created; because I know that they are not ashamed of the noblest of human sentiments now described by philosophers—the sentiment of patriotism; because I know they will not be beguiled into believing that in maintaining their empire they may forfeit their liberties. One of the greatest of Romans, when asked what were his politics, replied, *Imperium et libertas.* That would not make a bad programme for a British ministry. It is one from which Her Majesty's advisers do not shrink."

Lord Beaconsfield then concluded with a high eulogium upon the position and labours of the lord mayor, and, much to the amusement of the audience, prophesied that next year he would again have the honour of returning thanks for the cabinet.

This speech, if somewhat dull, was far from unsatisfactory. It was gratifying to find that trade was reviving; that there was every prospect of continued peace in Europe; and that the terrible disaster in the East had been amply avenged, whilst our north-western frontier had been secured and strengthened, and our supremacy in central Asia assured. The comments of the prime minister on the political situation gave rise to much discussion, and served as the text for various discourses both hostile and laudatory. It was evident that, as the government of Lord Beaconsfield had been in office for the last six years, the days of the parliament which had borne it to power were numbered, and that shortly the excitement of a general election would be inspiring with its party feeling the different political sections throughout the kingdom. Already Tory and Radical, Liberal and Whig, Agitator and Home Ruler were busy stumping the country, representing the past labours of the Conservative cabinet accord-

ing to the bias of the mind by which they were regarded. To the adherent of the Opposition the policy of the government of Lord Beaconsfield had resulted in financial collapse, in an utter absence of all worthy domestic legislation, and in an empty parade of power and authority, which some called Imperialism, but which would be more rightly designated by the word Chauvinism. On the other hand, the leaders of the Conservative party had opened their electoral campaign, and were refuting by statistics which could not be contradicted the charges brought against the government by their opponents.

Nor was the defence a difficult one to advance and substantiate. Viewed apart from the jaundiced conclusions of party prejudice, the six years of Tory rule had furnished a chapter in English history which can be read alike with pride and profit. The views of the prime minister as to the nature of the domestic legislation which the country required, had been fully carried out. "I have ever endeavoured," said Mr. Disraeli to his electors on the dissolution of the parliament in 1874, "and if returned to parliament I shall, whether in or out of office, continue to endeavour to propose or support all measures calculated to improve the condition of the people of this kingdom. But I do not think this great end is advanced by incessant or harassing legislation." There had been no "harassing legislation," and yet the measures enrolled upon the statute-book by the Conservative government, during their six years' tenure of power, had been among the most beneficial which the people of this country has ever had occasion to be grateful for.

The list speaks for itself. The savings of the poor had been protected by the law relating to building societies; the transfer of land had been facilitated by the passing of an act which simplified title to land; the health of the working classes had been improved by amendments of the factory acts, by the facilities given for the erection of artisans' dwellings, by insuring the purity of drugs and of food, by preventing the inclosure of commons, by affording the public facilities for the enjoyment of open spaces in the metropolis, and by the passing of an act for making better provision respecting the contagious diseases of animals. The prime minister had been laughed at for his policy of sewage, yet such measures as the following were certainly valuable additions to our code of domestic legislation:—"An Act consolidating and amending the sanitary laws, providing mortuaries, preventing overcrowding and other nuisances;" "an Act for preventing the pollution of rivers;" "an Act for the registration and regulation of canal boats used as dwellings;" "an Act empowering the establishment of public swimming baths;" and "an Act authorizing the Board of Works to enforce strict regulations for insuring the safety of buildings."

Every class, as it studied the enrolments in the statute-book during the past six years, found measures which afforded it protection and relief. The Act placing international copyright on a better footing was of benefit to the man of letters; the County Court Acts were amended to help the struggling tradesman; the farmer found relief in the clauses of the Agricultural Holdings Act, and in the Act making penal the adulteration of seeds; the working man saw his social and industrial freedom accomplished as he read the clauses of the Employers and Workmen Act, of the Act amending the laws relating to friendly societies, of the Act enlarging the powers of county courts with regard to disputes between employers and workmen, and of the Act which amended the law relating to industrial and provident societies; the wretched wife, too often the butt of a brutal husband, found freedom from her miseries in the Act which gave magistrates the power to grant a judicial separation to wives whose husbands had committed aggravated assaults upon them; the private

soldier saw his position improved by the Army Discipline and Regulation Act; the common sailor felt the perils of the ocean were mitigated by the Act which empowered the Board of Trade to stop unseaworthy ships; whilst justice saw evils redressed by the appointment of a public prosecutor, by the holding of additional assizes, and by the Act amending the law relating to prisons.

Important as these measures were, they were but the minor details of Conservative legislation. Of the graver measures we have already spoken, but it may be useful briefly to enumerate them. The licensed victuallers had been relieved by Mr. Cross of the more oppressive and degrading provisions of the Licensing Act passed by the late government; the Rating Act, which provided for the rating of woodlands, of the rights of shooting, fishing, &c., and of mines, removed anomalies and injustices which had long been complained of; the Church of Scotland had been strengthened by the Church Patronage Act introduced by the Duke of Richmond; the functions of the endowed schools commissioners had been very wisely transferred to the charity commissioners, and the wishes of the "pious founder" thus preserved; the Regimental Exchange Bill had authorized exchanges between officers upon full pay on condition of money payments, subject, of course, to regulations against abuse; the Peace Preservation Acts had been re-enacted, though with many material alleviations; the Royal Titles Bill; the Appellate Jurisdiction Act, which restored to the House of Lords the jurisdiction taken from it by the Judicature Act of 1873, and which strengthened the House of Lords as an appeal court by the appointment of two lords of appeal in ordinary; the Crossed Cheques Act, introduced by Lord Cairns, which gave to special and general crossings of cheques the validity which the public had supposed to attach to them, but which recent judicial decisions had denied them; the Act which amended the Elementary Education Act of 1870, granting justice to the denominational schools, and reconciling as much as possible the enforcement upon parents of the duty of educating their children with a just regard for the rights of conscience; the Prisons Bill and the Universities Bill; the Act enabling the South African colonies to unite themselves in a confederation; the Factories and Workshops Act; the Bishoprics Act, creating four new sees; the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act; the Army Discipline and Regulation Bill, which provided for the first time an intelligible code of military law; the Summary Jurisdiction Act; and the Irish University Education Act. If we remember the reforms effected by these measures, and the benefits which the country still derives from them, it can scarcely be brought as a charge against the Conservative party that during the years they were in power they were completely idle so far as domestic legislation was concerned.

Nor was their financial policy the failure the Opposition described it. Upon this point we cannot do better than quote the defence brought forward by an able but anonymous pamphleteer in the cause of Conservatism.*

"A desperate effort has been made," writes the pamphleteer, "by Mr. Gladstone and his lieutenants, Messrs. Lowe, Childers, and Dodson, to establish a charge of extravagant expenditure against the present government, and to represent it as adding to the burthens of the people, whereas Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Lowe were continually reducing them. There is not the slightest justification for the charge. There is no doubt, of course, that the expenditure is greater now than it was in the year 1873-74, but this no more proves that the expenditure is unnecessary, extravagant, or more burdensome to the people than the addition of the cost of collecting the revenue, which used to be deducted from the gross receipts,

* "Six Years of Conservative Government, 1874-79." National Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations. Westminster, February, 1880.

to the estimates of expenditure, proves that the expenditure has increased. The Tories have added, Mr. Gladstone says, eight and a quarter millions to the annual expenditure. These figures are grossly incorrect; but if we accept them, to what would the charge amount? The question for the country is not whether more money is spent now upon the army and navy, in the reduction of the debt,* upon education, and in relief of local taxation, than during Mr. Gladstone's administration; but whether *the additional expenditure is necessary and has been judiciously made?* That question is answered in the most satisfactory manner by an analysis of the figures upon which the opponents of the government profess to rest their case.

"Mr. Gladstone, whose usual tactics are to obscure all questions in a foam of high-sounding words, ventured, during his recent campaign in Midlothian, upon specific charges against the financial policy of the government, with a result which will probably induce him to return to his old system of vague and sweeping indictments. He compared the expenditure of the last year of his own government, 1873-74, with the expenditure of 1878-79, and crediting himself with what he called the extraordinary expenditure of the year, such as the payment of the *Alabama* award, and a payment on account of the Ashantee war, but giving the present government no credit for its extraordinary expenditure for the Zulu war (which it as little desired as Mr. Gladstone did the Ashantee war, for which, however, he was distinctly responsible), or the expenditure necessitated by the events in Eastern Europe, he denounced the government for having wantonly added more than £8,000,000 to the national expenditure. Mr. Gladstone's attack, which was full of extraordinary blunders and misstatements, such as the assertion that the income-tax had been raised to sixpence, was promptly met by Sir Stafford Northcote, who explained very clearly at Leeds how the increase of expenditure, which was not £8,250,000, but £7,500,000, had been caused. £2,300,000 are ascribed to an increase of the charges for the army and navy; £3,500,000 represent the increased charge upon the civil service estimates on account of Mr. Forster's Education Act, and the relief of local taxation at the expense of the national exchequer; whilst £1,937,000 are attributable to an increase of charge for the management and redemption of the debt. The increase in the army and navy charges needs no elaborate justification. It would have been in large part necessary, even if the state of affairs in Europe during the last three years had not compelled the government to put both forces in a condition for immediate action. Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Lowe, in order to manufacture their bogus surpluses, had reduced the navy to such a wretched condition that in the last year of their administration they were compelled to largely increase the estimates by an augmentation of the vote for the construction and repair of ships. Still, so far had the mischief gone that Mr. Ward Hunt found, as he declared in the House of Commons, only a 'phantom fleet,' and was obliged to take immediate measures to increase the number of ships, and put those already available into proper condition.

"The increase in the army charges has been quite as imperative. Lord Cardwell left the army in a most disorganized and dissatisfied condition. Officers and men were alike discontented. Many of our regiments were mere skeletons; our best non-commissioned officers and private soldiers were leaving the service as fast as they

* The principal feature of the budget of 1875 was the scheme of Sir Stafford Northcote for a regular and steady reduction of the national debt. The chancellor of the exchequer's proposal was the payment of a sum of £28,000,000 regularly on account of the debt. At the time he spoke the annual charge of the debt, including the exceptional expenditure authorized by previous parliaments for its reduction in the way of terminable annuities, was £27,250,000. By raising the annual payment from the consolidated fund to the national debt commissioners to £28,000,000, to which sum it was calculated it would only arrive in the course of the financial year 1877-78, Sir Stafford Northcote hoped to reduce the debt in thirty years by the very considerable sum of £162,000,000, altogether independently and apart from the other arrangements adopted for that purpose.

could, and such recruits as could be obtained were mere boys. Mr. Hardy set himself at once to work to improve the condition of the service. He accepted frankly and loyally the changes so wantonly introduced by Lord Cardwell. To have returned to the state of things which existed before would have been to make confusion worse confounded. He gradually, but surely, redressed the grievances of all ranks, and increased the inducements to enter the army. The Regimental Exchanges Act, founded upon the report of a royal commission appointed by Lord Cardwell, which said that the prohibition of paying and receiving money for exchanges between officers on full pay was a serious hardship to some and a serious loss to others, removed a grievance which caused great discontent; whilst the Army Promotion and Retirement Act secured at a considerable cost to the country that flow of promotion so necessary to the efficiency and satisfaction of the service which the purchase system supplied, and which Lord Cardwell, in abolishing purchase, promised should be maintained. Mr. Hardy also did much to make the army reserve a reality. But the most important of his measures is undoubtedly the increase of pay to the private soldiers and to the non-commissioned officers, which he carried through in 1876. He gave the men, in addition to their present pay, a deferred pay of 2*d.* per day, so that at the end of their six years' service there is a sum of £18 to their credit. A stronger inducement to good conduct and a better check upon desertion can hardly be imagined than this measure. Further, Mr. Hardy added a penny to the pay of the Guards, has given lance-corporals and lance-sergeants, who hitherto had performed onerous duties for nothing, the pay of their ranks, and has increased generally the pay of that most important class, the non-commissioned officers.

"In the civil expenditure a million and a-half of the increase is due to the operation of the Education Act. For this piece of extravagance—if extravagance it be—Mr. Gladstone himself, and his colleagues in the late government, are in the first place responsible. The other two millions represent charges previously paid out of the rates, but transferred by the action of the present government, and almost without opposition from Mr. Gladstone and his friends, to the national exchequer; they are therefore not an addition to, but a change in the incidence of, the national burthens. Indeed, this amount of two millions now paid out of the Treasury falls far short of the whole diminution of local taxation, and the full saving to the ratepayers. The transfer to the government of the management of prisons throughout the United Kingdom, enabled a large reduction to be made in the cost of maintenance, and we should be speaking quite within bounds if we were to estimate the actual relief to the taxpayers in the shape of a reduction of the demand upon them for rates and local charges, at two and a half millions.

"The increase of charge for the national debt, £1,937,000, seems at first sight to give some justification for Mr. Gladstone's accusations; but when the figures are examined they will be found to redound very much to the credit of the government. The only portion of this increase for which the government is responsible, beyond the small sum of £129,000, the interest upon the exchequer bonds issued on account of the two votes of credit, is an amount of between £600,000 and £700,000, which parliament in 1875, on the proposition of Sir Stafford Northcote, voted, by raising the charge for the permanent debt to a fixed sum in excess of that required, for the gradual reduction of the debt. The balance of the increased charge is merely a matter of account. The sum it represents is the interest the government pays for the moneys it has borrowed, under the provisions of Acts like the Education Act, to lend to local bodies, or to invest under the direction of parliament, as in the case of the Suez Canal, and for which an

entry, approximately equivalent, appears on the revenue side of the national balance-sheet. So far from having any need to shun inquiry into the comparative amounts of the debt, and the comparative annual charges for it, at the time they entered into office and at the present day, Lord Beaconsfield and his colleagues may point to the diminution they have effected in the debt as one of the many proofs of the soundness of their financial policy. To have reduced the national indebtedness in all its forms, including not only the so-called permanent debt — a comparison confined to which would be much more favourable to them—but all kinds of unfunded debt and other obligations and liabilities, by the sum of £10,242,000 in the course of these three troubled years, whilst putting the army and navy into a thoroughly effective condition, incurring an extraordinary expenditure of something like £8,000,000 to maintain English interests in the East, adding £1,500,000 yearly to the education vote, and transferring £2,000,000 of local taxation every year to the charge of the Treasury, and to have done it all in a time of commercial and agricultural depression, in a time of falling revenue receipts, is an achievement of which any ministry might be proud, and one which no Liberal ministry ever accomplished. . . . The financial position of the country was never sounder than it is at the present time. Efficiency has been secured without any neglect of economy, and the public burdens are now considerably less than they were when Mr. Gladstone left office. If the revival of trade, which seems to have commenced, should continue, the revenue will doubtless advance by 'leaps and bounds,' as it did in the prosperous times in which it was the fortune of the Liberals to be in power, and the government of the day will be able to make large remissions of taxation. It is enough for the present to remember that, whilst the government has met great and extraordinary charges, and reduced the national indebtedness more than £17,000,000, in spite of the revenue having fallen in consequence of commercial and agricultural distress, it, during the first part of its tenure of office, removed taxes amounting to just £4,750,000 per annum; and that even now, when it has been compelled to impose additional taxation, the comparison between the amount of taxes removed and taxes put on shows that the additional burden is not even, taking the official estimates, £1,000,000, whilst in effect it has been much less. The million has not been put upon the poor and struggling, but upon the well-to-do and rich."

Upon the same subject let us also hear the late chancellor of the exchequer. "The country," said Sir Stafford Northcote at the banquet given at the Guildhall on Lord Mayor's day, "is not less rich now than it was six years ago. On the contrary, every penny of income tax would now, if calculated on the same basis as formerly, produce £100,000 at least more than at the beginning of our administration. The savings of the people are not affected. The savings-banks deposits are at least £11,000,000 more than when we came into office. Look where you will, you will see that the credit and the position of the country have not been shaken, and that consols stand higher than they did. Our debt has been reduced in one direction and increased in another. But how has it been increased? By raising money to make advances to large bodies like the corporations of London and Birmingham, and many others who desire to have such loans. But look at matters fairly, and you will find that the account which we have to render is one of which there is no reason to be ashamed."

So much for the domestic legislation and financial policy of the party during the leadership of Lord Beaconsfield. They signified the establishment of beneficial measures for the working classes, the reduction of debt by £1,500,000, and the imposition of no additional taxation. When we remember the fierce diatribes

passed upon the Tory six years' tenure of power by the leaders of the Liberal party, and especially by the arch-agitator during his Midlothian campaign, we fail to discover the justice of their accusations, or any amendment on their part of the state of things they so eloquently deplored. The Opposition attributed the depression of trade to the extravagant expenditure and harassing policy of the late Conservative government; yet in spite of the accession to power of a Liberal cabinet, trade has not revived with that activity and generosity promised by Mr. Gladstone and his followers when out of office. We know how warmly the financial policy of Sir Stafford Northcote was attacked by the late Opposition; yet in spite of the Liberals having crossed over to the ministerial side of the House, in no material particular has that financial policy been changed. The conduct of the Conservatives towards Ireland was keenly criticised; and now, under Liberal rule, we have seen the gaols of that unhappy country crowded with untried prisoners, a severe coercion Act in full force, and the disaffected island on the eve of civil war. All that the change of government has as yet obtained for us has been a peace with dishonour, increased taxation, and the *clôture*.

But it was against the foreign policy of the Beaconsfield administration that the late Opposition aimed their most venomous shafts. Charge after charge was hurled against the late Tory chief for the ambitious and insatiable character of his "imperialism," for the straining of the prerogative to carry out his views, and for the extravagant expenditure which resulted. Yet time has proved that those accusations were utterly undeserved. If we institute a comparison between the foreign and colonial policy advocated by Lord Beaconsfield and that now advanced by the government of Mr. Gladstone, the result is certainly not in favour of Liberal rule. Compare the England under Lord Beaconsfield, honoured and influential in the councils of Europe, with its guarantees upheld, its promises fulfilled, and its protecting hand extended to all who had a claim upon the empire, with the England under the guidance of Mr. Gladstone, and see how the Liberal policy has been weighed in the balance and been found wanting. We have already alluded to the results consequent upon the purchase of the Suez Canal shares. The object of that purchase was to secure the safety of our route to India; and we can remember with what hostility that proceeding was assailed both as a financial operation and a political move. "The purchase of the shares," said Mr. Gladstone, speaking at Glasgow towards the close of the year 1879, and when bidding for the Liberal vote at the approaching general election, "was a delusion. . . . You were foolish enough to acquire a certain number of shares in the Canal; you have chosen to complicate your already too complicated transactions with *a financial operation of a ridiculous description*."

As the Liberal party invariably denied that any political importance could be attached to the purchase,* and as the operation was foolish financially, Mr. Gladstone was naturally asked by the Conservative party whether, "seeing that the present value of these shares is officially stated at £8,826,000, he proposes to take steps for realizing by their sale the accrued profit to the country of £4,826,000." Such a realization would have gone far to recoup the £6,000,000 which the Beaconsfield administration were accused of squandering in upholding the honour of England. To this question Mr. Gladstone thus replied:—"The object of the question is to obtain from me a confession which I am sorry I cannot gratify. I do not wish to repeat anything I said in the important discussion that took place on the question of the

* "The shares bought by the government do not tend to give us any influence whatever, either indirect, direct, or moral, or of any kind, in the council of the shareholders, and our interest is not identical with, but entirely opposed to that of the ordinary shareholders."—*Lord Hartington, House of Commons, February* 8, 1879.

purchase of these shares; but I wish to say that my objection to questions of this kind is that if the individual to whom they are put is not prepared to confess, he can hardly do otherwise than go back upon observations which he or others may have made at some previous time. The censures I passed on the transaction at the time or during the time of the election had *no reference to it, considered as a financial operation,* conceived and executed by a stockbroker, for I have been from the first a recommender and promoter of the Suez Canal; and when M. de Lesseps came to this country I encouraged him to persevere in his plan. The objection I had was that the operation was a complex one, and I cannot recede from that opinion, though I think it would be invidious now to repeat the reasons on which that opinion was based." Yet in spite of this answer, it was at Glasgow that Mr. Gladstone objected to the purchase of these shares because it was a financial operation of a ridiculous character. Only one conclusion can be drawn from this evasive and inconsistent conduct. If the purchase of these shares has no political importance, and was a commercial undertaking of a foolish character, why have these shares been retained by Mr. Gladstone when they can be sold at a splendid profit? The answer is that the purchase of the Suez Canal shares is not only a brilliant commercial success, but that Mr. Gladstone has been compelled to admit that considerable political importance attaches to the possession of them, and therefore he declines to part with them. In other words, he acknowledges and supports the prescient and statesmanlike conduct of the late Conservative prime minister in this matter.

Nor were the strictures passed upon the conservative policy in Central Asia a whit less unhappy. Events have proved that Lord Beaconsfield was right in the course he pursued, and Mr. Gladstone has been wrong. The object of Russia in Central Asia is apparent to all. By the annexation of the Turkoman country she has established for herself a solid base of military operations from which she can control Persia and Western Afghanistan. By her former campaign against Khiva she has cleared the path for her armies along the more eastern line of advance to Cabul, and has thus by these two proceedings gained a complete ascendency in Central Asia, and has removed the obstacles which it was said barred her progress to the frontier of Afghanistan. The object of Lord Beaconsfield's Indian policy was to prevent Russia dealing with Afghanistan as she has treated Khiva, Bokhara, and the districts between the Oxus and the Caspian. And since it was acknowledged by all our greatest authorities that it was absolutely necessary for the safety of our Indian empire that Afghanistan should either be an independent state united under the rule of a friendly Ameer, or brought within the sphere of those protected states whose foreign relations were supervised by British residents, and whose strong places were controlled by British troops, Lord Beaconsfield aimed at obtaining one of these alternatives. He came to the conclusion—and the publication of recent despatches justified the conclusion—that the Ameer Shere Ali was intriguing with Russia, and meditating hostile designs against British India. War was made against him and he was deposed.

As Lord Beaconsfield was still unwilling to break up the Afghan kingdom, Yakub Khan was recognized as the successor of Shere Ali. Then came the massacre of Sir Louis Cavagnari and the British mission, the advance of the British troops, and the treaty of Gandamuk. It was evident to Lord Beaconsfield that no trust could be placed in an Afghan prince, and that England must keep a force permanently stationed in Afghanistan to protect her own interests. This was done, and all danger was avoided, no matter who ruled at Cabul, whilst British troops held Candahar. It has pleased, however, the present Liberal government to reverse the policy of

Lord Beaconsfield, in spite of the opinions given by the most eminent civil and military authorities best acquainted with India, and hence civil war between the rulers of Herat and Afghanistan, the anarchy prevailing in Southern Afghanistan, and the spread of Russian intrigue. Under Lord Beaconsfield we had the strong places in Afghanistan held by British troops to check the advance of Russia; under Mr. Gladstone we have nothing between us and the Cossack, eager to bask in the sunshine of India, but a divided and disorganized Afghanistan, soon to fall a prey to the greed of Muscovite annexation. When a Russian army appears in the valley of the Indus, it will then be seen which was the wiser and more astute—the Indian policy of the late Conservative chief or that of the present Liberal premier.

As was the Indian policy of Lord Beaconsfield so was his colonial policy; it was vigilant, comprehensive, and astute. And this judgment must specially be passed upon the statesmanship which directed affairs in South Africa, and more particularly in the Transvaal. The Transvaal was annexed because it was in a state of anarchy and bankruptcy, and because the Boers were incapable of governing the district. The Zulu war was waged because the military organization of Cetchwayo was a constant source of jeopardy to the colony of Natal. The power of the Zulu chieftain was crushed, his country divided between chieftains whose policy was marked out for them by the English government, and who were to be controlled by English residents; and thus peace and freedom from danger were restored to Natal.

Then came the revolt in the Transvaal, and the reversal of the policy of Lord Beaconsfield. We were defeated by the Boers, yet such was the very moment when a Liberal administration arrived at the conclusion to restore the annexed territory to our half-savage victors. Mr. Gladstone, who had been so callous as to the loss of life in Ireland, was so touchingly humane and sensitive, when it was proposed that the turbulent and slave-advocating Boers were to be attacked by our arms, that he declined to be accused of "blood-guiltiness," and gave orders for English troops, when smarting under disaster, to retire from the conflict and to concede what the rebellious section of our victors demanded. Our authority in South Africa therefore received a blow under which it still reels. We have been condemned as poltroons and deserters from our plighted word. The loyal inhabitants of the Transvaal, who regarded themselves as safe under the protection of the English crown, have been left to the tender mercies of the savage Dutchmen, and the friendly natives of South Africa have been taught the shameful lesson that, when it suits the policy of an English minister, their past fidelity will be disregarded, and they will be abandoned to any fate that barbarity may have in store for them. Defeat, dishonour, and discredit, such have been the results of the Liberal colonial policy. The dismemberment of our empire in South Africa under such circumstances has been the bitterest cup which Englishmen, both abroad and at home, have had administered to them during this century. "It has already touched," said Lord Cairns, when condemning the arrangements made by the Liberal government with the Boers in the Transvaal, "It has already touched, and will every day touch more deeply, the heart of the nation. Other reverses we have had—other disasters; but a reverse is not dishonour, and disaster does not necessarily imply disgrace. To Her Majesty's government we owe a sensation which to this country of ours is new, and which certainly is not agreeable.

> "'In all the ills we ever bore
> We grieved, we sighed, we wept; we never blushed before.'"

It was this policy, both domestic and foreign, which the nation, now on the eve of a general election, was called upon to consider, and to decide whether the administration of Lord Beaconsfield was still entitled to the confidence of the country.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE CONSERVATIVE COLLAPSE.

Coming events failed to cast the shadows of Conservative overthrow before them. At the meeting of parliament there was nothing to show that a change in favour of Liberal rule had come over the spirit of the country. The government of Lord Beaconsfield was apparently as strong and as popular as ever. Its foreign policy, its attitude towards the distress and the anti-rent agitation in Ireland, and its financial proposals, appeared still to enjoy the confidence and approval of the nation. If the pulse of public feeling could be felt by the recent elections that had taken place, its beats indicated a strong and healthy Conservatism. At Liverpool a Conservative was returned by a large majority, whilst at Southwark, one of the strongholds of the Opposition, the Conservative candidate received more votes than both of his opponents put together. The turn of events had also tended to consolidate the position of the party in power. From Afghanistan came the good news that Sir Frederick Roberts was master of the situation; that the armed gathering which had beleaguered him at Cabul had dispersed, and that the efforts of Mahomed Jan to create an insurrection had collapsed. In the Transvaal order had been restored, and Sir Garnet Wolseley, his mission now accomplished, was on the eve of returning home. A little dispute we had with Turkey touching religious oppression had been settled by the Porte according to our wishes. Indeed, everything appeared to favour the Conservative cause, and from the outward aspect of affairs ministers had every reason to believe that their tenure of office was on no side endangered.

Parliament met February 5, 1880. The speech from the throne was encouraging. The relations between England and all the powers continued to be friendly. Since the prorogation of parliament the course of events had tended to furnish additional security to the maintenance of European peace, on the principles laid down by the treaty of Berlin. The outrage at Cabul had been avenged, though the unsettled condition of the country rendered the recall of the troops impossible for the present; "but the principle on which my government has hitherto acted remains unchanged," said Her Majesty; "and while determined to make the frontiers of my Indian empire strong, I desire to be on friendly relations alike with those who may rule in Afghanistan and with the people of that country." Peace had been established in South Africa. "The capture and deposition of the Zulu king," continued the sovereign, "and the breaking up of the military organization on which his dynasty was based, have released my possessions in that part of the world from a danger which has seriously impeded their advancement and consolidation." As to home affairs, the commission was still inquiring into the causes of agricultural depression throughout the United Kingdom; owing to the serious deficiency in the crops in certain parts of Ireland special precautions had been taken to guard against the calamities with which those districts might be threatened, and ample preparations for the distribution of food and fuel had been made, as well as the employment of labour stimulated by exceptional advances from the state; the consideration of the criminal code and of the law of bankruptcy was to be resumed;

bills were also to be introduced for enlarging the powers of owners of settled land, for amending the lunacy laws, and for simplifying the practice of conveyancing. These were the chief features in the royal message.

In the debate on the address Lord Beaconsfield took a prominent part. His speech was a reply to the charges brought forward against the government by Lord Granville. The leader of the Opposition in the Upper House had compensated for his silence during the recess by making one of those quiet but no less effective attacks upon the policy of ministers for which his parliamentary oratory was remarkable. Lord Granville regretted that not one word of sympathy had been expressed in the speech from the throne as to the depression under which the whole agriculture of the country was suffering. He objected to the Berlin treaty, and branded the convention as the most indefensible that England had entered into during the century. He asserted that the war in South Africa was neither just nor necessary, and was only a proof of the weakness of the government. Then he concluded by condemning the state of affairs in Afghanistan, which he attributed to the absence of any fixed and decided policy on the part of the cabinet.

Lord Beaconsfield refuted these charges. The clauses of the treaty of Berlin, he said, were being carried into effect, and arrangements had been entered into conducive to the maintenance of general peace. The war in South Africa could not have been avoided, and it had terminated with every prospect of the scheme of confederation in South Africa being realized. With regard to Afghanistan, the prime minister spoke at greater length. "Well, then," he continued, "the noble earl [Lord Granville] comes to the case of Afghanistan. I must confess to being at a loss to know exactly what the noble earl wants us to tell him. He addresses to us a question which does not appear to me to be founded on fact, or to have any character of reality. He assumes certain opinions, and imputes them to the chiefs and sirdars of Afghanistan. He informs us that the whole country is against us, whereas those who have studied the question on the spot know that only a very limited portion of the population is against us. Then he wants to know what the government are going to do? Well, that is a question which it is difficult to answer, if only in this sense—that it concerns matters which are in an unfinished state. You must consider the question, first, of Afghanistan with reference to the British empire, and secondly, with reference to Afghanistan itself. So far as the relations between this country and Afghanistan are concerned, our policy is perfectly clear. It was adopted after due consideration, and as we believed with complete and perfect knowledge; and no mistake has been made in carrying it into effect. It is true that a great disaster has occurred, but to such contingencies human affairs are always subject. As regards Afghanistan, what we aimed at was to secure an adequate and powerful frontier for our Indian empire. That we obtained, and we obtained it in a very short time with brilliant military success; and having obtained that we negotiated the treaty of Gandamuk, which described and sealed that policy. It is unnecessary to recall to the notice of noble lords the terrible circumstances which have for a moment prevented that policy from being carried into effect. No doubt it is possible, in applying the same principles which have always influenced us, that circumstances may occur to alter some details of the scheme which were not contemplated at the outset. *But our policy remains the same.* It is a policy opposed to annexation—a policy in favour of the people of Afghanistan being governed by their own chief or chiefs—they can decide who these should be—but which at the same time retains our powerful and adequate military frontier. That is our policy, so far as England is concerned.

"As regards Afghanistan, we must be

guided by circumstances over which we have not always entire control. It is an error to suppose that Afghanistan, generally speaking, was governed in past times by one individual. On the contrary, the grandfather of Yakub Khan was, I believe, the first ruler that collected under his power all the tribes of the country. It may be necessary that we should restore Afghanistan to the state in which it was previous to the accession of Dost Mahomed in that respect. That is possible. The noble earl does not suppose that we are sitting down with our hands in our pockets all this time. Although we have our English interests first of all to look to—that is to say, *the security of our Indian empire*—our next object is to have prosperous, happy, and contented neighbours. Well, we are taking those steps which we think are wise, and which, in our opinion, are the best calculated to bring about the results which we desire. *But these are things which cannot be done in a day.* You cannot settle them as you would pay a morning visit. If you have got a vast country full of warlike populations, and those populations ready to enter into any engagements, provided you meet their particular wishes, it is not always easy to ascertain how far the gratification of those wishes may tend to the tranquillity of the country. If we sanction in any way the position and authority of individuals, we take upon ourselves a great responsibility if we make a choice in which the great body of the people have no confidence. It is a work of labour to bring a country like Afghanistan, in its present state, into a condition of tranquillity and prosperity. But there are in that country all the elements of peace and prosperity, and the noble earl is labouring under a most erroneous impression in supposing that the great body of the people there are opposed to us. In reality, not one-tenth are opposed to us. I am not talking of those who are merely controlled by our regiments. I am talking of those people who really represent masses—the great chiefs and the great tribes who have placed themselves in confidential and friendly communication with Her Majesty's government, and from whose declarations, and a wise calculation of the motives which actuate them, we have a right to infer that they are sincere in their desire to bring about a settlement of the country. I believe such a settlement will be brought about, and that we shall have in Afghanistan a neighbour on whom we can depend, on the whole, for its tranquillity and its desire for commercial intercourse; and that that result will be accomplished totally irrespective of the great object of strengthening our frontier, while it will be highly favourable to the Afghan people themselves."

Still this explanation failed to satisfy the Opposition. Further information was required as to the future policy of the government in Afghanistan. How, it was asked, did ministers propose to restore order? Upon what principles were the future relations with the country to be regulated? Was the occupation of Afghanistan by British troops to be permanent or temporary? What territory was to be annexed beyond the new frontier? Was the policy suggested by Sir Henry Rawlinson to be accepted, and were we to hold permanently Candahar and Jelalabad, distribute the Ameer's lands among mutually independent chiefs controlled by a resident English agent, and enter into a new alliance with Persia? These were the questions freely demanded of the government, and in the Duke of Argyle the Opposition found a spokesman competent and willing to represent their views upon this phase of the Eastern question. A blue-book of correspondence relating to Afghanistan had been issued early in the session, in which it appeared, from certain despatches written by General Roberts, that Russian intrigue with the father of Yakub Khan had been carried much deeper than had been generally supposed. At the same time it was also hinted that the government had in their possession various documents dis-

covered at Cabul of a much more compromising character for Russia than any that had yet been published. Late in February the Duke of Argyle, who had made our Afghan policy his special study, moved for the production of such documents, at the same time seizing the opportunity to deliver an attack upon the course recently adopted by ministers in the East.

In an able but severely partial speech the duke criticised the Afghan policy of the Conservative party. Every evil predicted by the opponents of that policy, he asserted, had actually happened. There had been no occasion for the aggressive measures pursued by ministers. The advances of Russia in the East did not, he said, menace our position; the late Ameer had not been hostile to our interests; all our troubles in Afghanistan had been simply due to the disturbing tactics of the government. Ministers had forced a resident upon the Ameer; they had acted contrary to the treaties with Afghanistan; and they had violated the traditional policy of the Indian government during the last forty years. "I am bound to say," concluded his Grace, "that the whole transactions of this Afghan war are of a character which, in my opinion, justify the severest language which can be used in party warfare. I believe it is a policy which has originated in weak and unmanly fear. It has been a policy of violence sometimes approaching deceit. It has been a policy most injurious to the interests of the people of England; and, above all, a policy which has cast a lasting stain upon the honour of the British empire."

This special pleading, based upon the ignoring of facts patent to all but those who were blinded by party hostility, led to an important debate, in which the leaders on both sides of the House took part. As the discussion proceeded it was evident that the objections of the Opposition to the policy of the government could not sustain examination, and that ministers had had no alternative in the past but to enter upon the aggressive with the Ameer. "I am well acquainted with all the official correspondence on the subject," said Lord Napier of Magdala, "and I am quite satisfied that we had a sufficient and legitimate cause for going to war with the Ameer. When the Ameer received a Russian ambassador, but refused to admit our embassy, and in other ways evinced hostility, it was quite time to bring him to reason. He had raised a large force of regular troops, he had constructed fortifications, and had collected large stores of war materials. Had we remained quiescent the Russian embassy would soon have been followed by Russian officers, and a formidable force might have been created, which would have been a serious danger to our north-west frontier in case of our being occupied in any other quarter."

The debate was brought to a close by Lord Beaconsfield. "What is the real question at issue?" he asked (February 20, 1880). "That is what the country is looking to. It is a clear conception of what really is at issue that alone ought to guide us in this matter. Well, my lords, you know that some three years ago or more—most unexpectedly and most undesired by those who were advising the crown—what is called the Eastern question revived. It is unnecessary to recall to your lordships' recollection all the incidents of that period. It is well known there was a moment when the relations between Russia and Great Britain were of the most delicate character; when indeed there were those, certainly in Russia, who looked on war not only as impending, but as inevitable. Well, in these circumstances, Russia naturally—and I do not blame her—looked to a point where she thought she might embarrass the power of England, and weaken the influence and authority which England was exercising. She looked to Central Asia—the influence of Central Asia on India—to effect that great object. Well, we had to consider what course we ought to pursue in these circumstances. The question of the north-western frontier of India was no

new question. It has not grown up in these few years, as one would suppose from some speeches in this House. It is one which has long occupied the attention and consideration of all Indian statesmen, and I think I may also add of all those statesmen in England who aspire at all to the responsibility of the conduct of our affairs.

"In this state of things we had to decide what was the best step to counteract the efforts Russia was then making; for though war had not been declared her movements had commenced in Central Asia, and the struggle had commenced which was to decide for ever which power should possess the great gates of India. One would imagine, listening to the noble duke—at least a stranger might, for we are accustomed to his expositions—but a stranger, charmed by his eloquence, carried away by the fervour of his phrase, and overwhelmed by the multiplicity of his details—a stranger might listen to him to-night and never form the slightest idea that the real question at issue was whether England should possess the gates of her own great empire in India, and whether the time had not arrived when we could no longer delay that the problem should be solved, and in a manner as it has been solved by Her Majesty's government. . . . From our declared policy we have not swerved for a moment. We resolved that the time had come when this country should acquire *the complete command and possession of the gates of our Indian empire.* Having come to that resolution we took the most effective steps to accomplish our purpose. That purpose was accomplished and achieved with complete success. We obtained the gates of our Indian empire; they are in our possession now; and I trust the hour will never arrive when they will not be in the possession of this country. . . . Nothing which has occurred—though many things have occurred which we did not contemplate, and which we deplore—nothing has occurred which would for a moment induce us to modify our policy. Nothing has occurred which would induce us in any way to change our policy. Nor has anything happened—though much has happened, I admit, that one remembers with deep regret and heartfelt pain—nothing has happened which, so far as our conduct and policy are concerned, ought in the slightest degree to influence us."

Lord Beaconsfield then contended that the government had not been to blame for the death of Cavagnari and his gallant companions, and that ministers throughout the proceedings in Afghanistan had acted with perfect consistency—a consistency which could only arise from a clear conception of the object they had to accomplish. That object had been attained. The British troops were in military command of the country, and had most of its strong places in their possession. Why then, it was asked, if the object of the government had been attained—why not now leave the country?

"We cannot leave the country now," replied Lord Beaconsfield, "because it would indeed be a stain upon our honour if we left the country in a state of turbulence and confusion. But the state of turbulence and confusion does not originate from our general policy or from the accomplishment of the great ends we have achieved. It has originated from circumstances which no human foresight could guard against, and the consequences must be met by temper and decision, but certainly not by withdrawing. This is not a moment in which England, in that part of the world, should show diminished determination. Although your lordships unfortunately have no opportunity of expressing your opinion on this occasion, I think we have a right to conclude that the feeling and the convictions of your Lordships' House upon this subject are the same as when, more than a year ago, you recorded your verdict by an overwhelming majority. I am ready to admit that a change of circumstances may also induce a change of opinion,

and you ought to enjoy the privilege of recording it afresh in the most complete degree, and with the utmost conviction. But until there is evidence of a change of opinion in this House much stronger than we have yet witnessed, let me at least believe that the Peers of England are still determined to uphold not only the empire but the honour of the country. Let me believe that they will not sanction our withdrawal from Afghanistan because we have accomplished our particular purpose, leaving the population of that country in a state of comparative anarchy, according to the description given by the noble earl [Lord Granville] and his friends; but I do not join in these descriptions of Afghanistan. I believe there are considerable portions of Afghanistan in a state of absolute peace and great prosperity. The district of Candahar alone is one that might make noble lords hesitate before they accept these opinions, so rashly enunciated, as to the disorganized state of the country. It is—I will not say a corner—but a remote district of the country, and a crowd of turbulent and unpaid soldiery, that have brought about these great misfortunes. But, my lords, you must not be distracted from the pursuance of a great national policy by accidents of this kind, and temporary circumstances which, you may rest assured, will disappear. Be firm, be resolute, and be determined. Let men know that while you are ready to be just, you are resolved to be obeyed, and all these difficulties and complications will disappear at once."

After this sound and spirited protest—how different from the reasons advanced by the Liberals for the abandonment of the Transvaal!—the motion of the Duke of Argyll, "That an humble address be presented to Her Majesty for copy of any correspondence found at Cabul between the late Ameer Shere Ali Khan and the Russian authorities in Turkestan or St. Petersburg," was withdrawn, and the matter for the moment was allowed to drop. The government did not consider it was for the public interest that such papers should be laid before parliament.

Affairs nearer home now occupied the attention of the country. During the last few months the Liberals had been strongly urging upon the government to dissolve parliament, and to appeal to the nation. There had been no precedent, declared Mr. Gladstone, for a parliament dealing with the business of seven complete sessions. Various matters had, however, tended to compel the Conservative party to defer this appeal to a later period, and chief among them had been the sad state of Ireland. Across St. George's Channel the distress caused by a series of bad harvests had been augmented by the action of the Home Rulers, who openly advocated the dismemberment of the empire, and hampered industry and enterprise by their disloyal teaching and infamous restrictions. Lands that could be tilled were left uncultivated, rents that could be paid were kept back by the intimidated tenant, and the whole country was paralyzed by the state of terrorism which had been introduced by the Land Leaguers. The government had interfered by state aid to mitigate the surrounding distress and to thwart the inflammatory proceedings of the anti-rent agitators. "It was not within our power," said Sir Stafford Northcote, when explaining why parliament had not been dissolved earlier, "to come to a decision upon this subject before. In the course of the autumn the state of Ireland caused no inconsiderable amount of anxiety. We perceived from an early period that we should have to, and as time went on we saw that it was necessary for us to take measures, upon our own responsibility as a government, to prevent distress or to alleviate distress in that country. Those measures we took without the authority or sanction of parliament, and it was necessary that parliament should be called together in order to consider and to give its sanction to what we had done, and also to consider what further measures should be taken." The Opposition, however, now loudly

declared that as the Irish business, which had rendered the reassembling of the Houses necessary, had been disposed of, ministers had no further excuse for putting off the dissolution of parliament. At first it appeared as if the seventh session would be completed; important bills were introduced, the business of the Houses was carried on as usual, and no indications were given of the probability of an approaching general election. Then suddenly, and to the surprise of all—for so well had the secret been kept—Lord Beaconsfield announced, March 8, 1880, that parliament would be dissolved at Easter.

On the following day the prime minister issued his manifesto, couched in the form of a letter to the Duke of Marlborough, the lord lieutenant of Ireland. Recent events have only proved how clearly Lord Beaconsfield divined the future when he penned this memorable document. We have seen the Liberal party, inspired by its Radical supporters, coquetting with the Home Rulers, plunging Ireland into deeper distress, and stimulating her unhappy people to commit deeper crimes; and we have seen how the "passive principle of non-interference" has lowered the authority of England in the councils of Europe, and militated against the preservation of peace. Let us give heed to the teaching conveyed in this masterly state paper.

"10 Downing Street, *March* 8, 1880.

"My Lord Duke,—The measures respecting the state of Ireland which Her Majesty's government so anxiously considered with your excellency, and in which they were much aided by your advice and authority, are now about to be submitted for the royal assent, and it is at length in the power of the ministers to advise the queen to recur to the sense of her people. The arts of agitators, which represented that England, instead of being the generous and sympathizing friend, was indifferent to the dangers and the sufferings of Ireland, have been defeated by the measures, at once liberal and prudent, which parliament has almost unanimously sanctioned.

"During the six years of the present administration the improvement of Ireland and the content of our fellow-countrymen in that island have much occupied the care of the ministry, and they may remember with satisfaction that in this period they have solved one of the most difficult problems connected with its government and people by establishing a system of public education open to all classes and all creeds.

"Nevertheless, a danger, in its ultimate results scarcely less disastrous than pestilence and famine, and which now engages your excellency's anxious attention, distracts that country. *A portion of its population is attempting to sever the constitutional tie which unites it to Great Britain in that bond which has favoured the power and prosperity of both.*

"It is to be hoped that all men of light and leading will resist this destructive doctrine. The strength of this nation depends upon the unity of feeling which should pervade the United Kingdom and its widespread dependencies. The first duty of an English minister should be to consolidate that co-operation which renders irresistible a community educated, as our own, in an equal love of liberty and law.

"And yet there are some who challenge the expediency of the imperial character of this realm. Having attempted and failed to enfeeble our colonies by their policy of decomposition, they may perhaps now recognize in the disintegration of the United Kingdom a mode which will not only accomplish but precipitate their purpose.

"The immediate dissolution of parliament will afford an opportunity to the nation to decide upon a course which will materially influence its future fortunes and shape its destiny.

"Rarely in this century has there been an occasion more critical. The power of England and the peace of Europe will largely depend on the verdict of the country. Her Majesty's present ministers have hitherto been enabled to secure that peace so necessary to the welfare of all civilized countries, and so peculiarly the interest of our own. But this ineffable blessing cannot be obtained by the passive principle of non-interference. Peace rests on the presence, not to say the ascendency, of England in the councils of Europe. Even at this moment the doubt supposed to be inseparable from popular election, if it does not diminish, certainly arrests her influence, and is a main reason for not delaying an appeal to the national voice. Whatever may be its consequence to Her Majesty's present advisers, may it return to Westminster a parliament not unworthy of the power of England, and resolved to maintain it!

"I have the honour to be, my Lord Duke, your faithful servant,

"Beaconsfield."

The publication of this letter led to some adverse comment. Verbal critics complained that there was too much sonorousness in it for the fastidious ear, that the phrase, "men of light and leading," was ungrammatical, and that the statement as to the alleged "policy of decomposition" was devoid of meaning. The Liberals were indignant at being accused of complicity with the Home Rulers (after the Kilmainham treaty how justifiable was such indignation!), and declared that they knew of no party which challenged "the expediency of the imperial character of this realm." In their turn, the disaffected Irish "highly disapproved of the attempt of the prime minister to stir up feelings of hatred between England and Ireland for the purpose of furnishing an election cry to his followers, and regarded with indignation his flagrant misrepresentation of the loyal efforts of the Home Rule party to extend the blessings of constitutional government to Ireland"—"loyal efforts," aided by the hand of the political assassin! Then, it was asked, what were the grave dangers threatening the peace of Europe, from which deliverance was impossible without the continuance of Lord Beaconsfield in power? What, too, was to be understood by the ascendency of England in the councils of Europe? The prime minister was called upon to reply to these queries. On a motion by Lord Stratheden and Campbell for the production of an apocryphal letter from Shere Ali to the Sultan, stirring up Turkey to make war upon England, Lord Beaconsfield was invited to explain himself as to these "terrifying insinuations."

The introducer of the motion, in a long speech which was more exhausting to his hearers than exhaustive of his subject, took the opportunity of condemning the Eastern policy of the government. It had not been, in his opinion, sufficiently aggressive. The document he asked for, said Lord Stratheden, must be utterly obnoxious to ministers, since it stigmatized in the gravest terms the conduct of the government on the Eastern question, and showed how the late Ameer had been estranged from Great Britain on account of the infidelity of a Conservative cabinet to all existing treaties. He asserted, and produced one-sided arguments to support his statement, that the government, since the autumn of 1874, were responsible in a great degree for the late war between Russia and the Porte. He condemned the treaty of Berlin, the responsibilities we had entered into, and the neglect of the cabinet in not availing themselves of the opportunities offered them to check Russian aggression, and to maintain the independence and integrity of the Turkish empire. Lord Stratheden thus concluded his jaundiced lecture:—"The present," he said, "is not one of the occasions when anyone at all conversant with the subject ought to insist on an Eastern danger which he realizes, or urge the country to the path of duty from the slumber of indifference, or recommend a course of action to a government whose hesitation and disunion have been too openly revealed to us. During the last five years, however, such occasions have been frequent. They are alone sufficient to condemn the policy which leads to them. In this House ministers are rich in parliamentary and even oratorical ability. Great as it may be, it will not entitle them to disprove a large share of responsibility for the unhappy war of 1877. They will never show that in May, June, or July of that year the British fleet might not have been despatched to the Bosphorus to the incalculable benefit of Europe. They will not be able, either, to repudiate the parentage of the usurping treaty which they afterwards contended with, as I hold, unsuccessfully. The transactions are voluminous and intricate. They are beyond the range perhaps of industry to grasp or utterance to mention them; but yet their history may be given in a sentence. It is the record of wisdom faintly and imperfectly adhered to, of duty openly and

systematically violated, of reparation eagerly but ineffectually grasped at."

Lord Granville followed suit. After declaring that, from the point of view of Lord Stratheden, a strong case had been brought forward against the government, and after blaming ministers for so suddenly dissolving parliament, he proceeded to examine the statements contained in the letter to the Duke of Marlborough. He would not describe the letter as an electioneering squib; still its form was a little unusual. "I do not, however," he said with suave acidity, "complain of that. One hook is nearly as good as another upon which to hang a declaration of principles. My complaint is of another kind. It relates to the absence from that declaration of any principles of a tangible character. Literary critics have fallen foul of the language and the grammar, but I have no pretence to be a literary critic. My only object, if I write or speak, is to convey my meaning as clearly as I can to others. I am not convinced by the united authority of Prince Talleyrand, Dr. South, and Cardinal de Retz that language was given to man to conceal his thoughts. And if I find that a singularly brilliant writer, a real master of English, puts together words which are understood neither by friends nor by opponents, I conclude that it is not that he cannot, but that he does not wish to explain his meaning. A first-rate judge, speaking of this manifesto, said, 'You must not look at this design as if it were a picture intended to be hung on the eye line. It is a bit of stage painting, intended to be looked at from an immense distance and to produce a general effect, utterly irrespective of correct drawing or accurate details.' Now, what is this general effect? It appears to me that it is something of this sort—that the government intend for the future to soar above the details of home reforms and social progress; that with regard to Ireland they not only desire to excite a firm desire to keep united the kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, but that they think it convenient for election purposes to excite the popular feeling against that country, and to convey an impression that the Opposition are indifferent to the union of the two islands; that the same difference of opinion exists between themselves and ourselves as to our relations with India and with the colonies; and that as to the influence of England in Europe, this is the exclusive monopoly of the present government, which has been used in the past and which will be used in the future with a splendid success perfectly unattainable by any other party in the state." Then the leader of the Opposition proceeded to criticise the declaration that the government had maintained peace. Where had they maintained peace, he asked? In Europe? No. In Africa? No. In Asia? No. Who were the nations which wanted to fight, but were prevented by the government? Again, as to ascendency. Where was the ascendency of England over the councils of Europe shown? At Constantinople? With the Slavs? With the Greeks? Was it over France and Egypt? Was it in Vienna and Berlin? Could anything, sneered Lord Granville as he sat down, be less judicious than to make such idle boasts of ascendency?

Lord Beaconsfield replied. "There is very great difficulty," he sarcastically began (March 15, 1880), "in following the speech of the noble baron who introduced this motion. His style of oratory is very peculiar. We all willingly acknowledge that he is acquainted with the countries of which he speaks, and has made himself, much to his honour and credit, master of the diplomatic details of the last few years; and this combination gives a plausibility to his assumptions, for which there is really not the slightest foundation. His arguments are sound enough, if the assumptions could only be proved. The arguments and deductions of the noble lord are always illustrated by a certain degree of local colouring, which, of course, recommended

them to the consideration of the House; and his personal experience, combined with his deep study of the subject, naturally produces the impression that we are listening to a noble lord eminently qualified to speak on such topics. The noble lord says, 'You had a great opportunity in 1876, and you lost it.' What was the opportunity? The noble lord never told us. Throughout his speech, which was not a short one, he dwelt upon the opportunity which was lost; but he never told us what the opportunity was. 'Then,' said the noble lord, 'after 1876 you had another opportunity.' Here, I must say, he did condescend to give us some details for our guidance. 'You ought to have sent an embassy to St. Petersburg and not to Constantinople; everything would then have been settled to the satisfaction of Europe.' But here again is an assumption of the noble lord.

"I suppose that we who are responsible for the conduct of public affairs, or any gentlemen in our situation, would not have carried them on without some communication with St. Petersburg. The noble lord seems to assume that two years elapsed and there was not the slightest communication between St. Petersburg and the Court of St. James'. The noble lord made a summary of the six years, and the summary is this:—You have deprived Turkey of all authority on the Bosphorus, and you have impaired her to an extent which must inevitably lead to her losing her position there. Well, that is the opinion of the noble lord, but it *is not the general opinion; it is not the opinion of the statesmen of several countries.* There are compromises which necessarily have been made, arrangements which have been agreed to, without which no ultimate consent or decision could have been arrived at; but if there was one point on which all were agreed, it was that command should be given to Turkey over the Bosphorus, and arrangements should be made with reference to Constantinople which would render it certain, that it would remain in the hands either of the Sultan or of some power whose position there would not menace the independence of Europe.

"I say, in answer to the noble lord, I entirely deny his summary; and I say that one weaker, less founded, less true, less trustworthy, never came under the consideration of your Lordships' House. The noble lord has given us many specimens of his peculiar kind of diplomatic oratory this session, and some justice should be done to its peculiarities and beauties. He forgets, and thinks the House will also forget, there is one great distinction between himself and all on this side of the House, and I believe all on the other side of the House. The noble lord is a man of war. He says, 'You lost a good opportunity; you should have done this.' But all the things we ought to have done would have been acts of war; and our duty as an English ministry was *to save the country from being involved in war, and, if possible, to prevent war in any part of Europe.* The noble lord, of course, disapproves the manner in which we managed affairs. He has only one specific for the settlement of the Eastern question—war in the beginning, in the middle, and in the end. The object of Her Majesty's ministers, as I doubt not it would have been the object of our rivals if they had sat on these benches, was to save this country from war, and, if possible, other countries also. The speech is made because the noble lord is in possession of a letter from Shere Ali to the Sultan, stirring up the Sultan to make war against England, and to enter into an alliance with that power which of all powers is the one he should most avoid allying himself to; it descants on the great advantages of an alliance with Russia. The noble lord's motion is that, on the part of the government, we should produce this letter. *We have no official knowledge of it;* we have it only in the form in which the noble lord has it, through its having been printed in the newspapers. *The letter in question is without doubt a forgery,* and the

noble lord has made it the foundation of a great debate, which has elicited some important revelations from the noble earl opposite with reference to the condition of his party. He has made them on a letter which is apocryphal and spurious.

"The history of this letter is, I believe, this—it appeared in a Turkish paper, it was copied into other papers, and a considerable controversy was occasioned by it. A communication was in consequence made to the Turkish government, and the authenticity of the letter was immediately denied. The Sultan himself personally declared that it was perfectly apocryphal, and therefore no copy came into our possession, nor did we hear anything further about it. I must say that the Russian newspapers seem to have treated that letter in a spirit of very judicious criticism. The *Golos* of the 15th of July said:—'This correspondence, which *is undoubtedly false,* has made a strong impression upon the Mohammedan population in India. It was reprinted in all the leading Indian newspapers, and gave rise to endless rumours in all the bazaars.' I think if your lordships were to read the letter—and I have no doubt you read it some time ago—you would see immediately that it was written by a European. It is much too epigrammatic for an Oriental; and it is evidently that of some inexperienced journalist who commenced his vocation on a small Turkish newspaper which then existed in Constantinople, and was distinguished for its hostility to England. This letter, disclaimed by the Sultan, and by him personally denounced as utterly apocryphal, is the foundation for the debate of to-night.

"The noble earl opposite [Lord Granville] has taken fair advantage of this discussion to make some amiable remarks on the state of public affairs; and the noble earl has taken the letter which I addressed to the lord lieutenant of Ireland as his chief text. I do not collect from the noble earl that his objections are of a very substantial or serious character. The first objection is that we have advised Her Majesty to dissolve parliament. Well, the noble earl is the head of a powerful party, who have for the last six months been denouncing the government because they did not advise Her Majesty to dissolve parliament, and some members of his party actually used language of invective on the subject. I will make great admissions to the noble earl. I will admit that there is hardly a higher function to exercise or a more responsible duty to encounter than to advise your sovereign to dissolve parliament in any circumstances, except when the absolute lapse of time renders it the duty of a ministry to do so. I look upon it as an act which involves the highest responsibility on the part of the ministry who advise it. . . .

"To advise a dissolution is an act which involves great responsibility; and we have considered it in all its bearings. Nothing but a sense of duty, of overwhelming duty, induced us to take the step; and no other vindication, I think, is necessary, especially as we are now appealing to our country. The noble earl touched, I think, upon some domestic subjects which I ought to have noticed; but as the debate is on foreign affairs I may perhaps be excused from noticing them. I have already troubled your lordships to-night with remarks upon Ireland,* and I shall not touch upon that subject again. I will rather come to that point in the noble lord's speech in which he questioned my right to describe what my views were as to the relations between this and other countries, and the degree of danger or security that might arise from them. He questioned my right, and I must assert that right in a manner which cannot be mistaken. I do not understand what the noble lord means by perpetually impressing us with the necessity of publishing to the nation every single thing connected

* Lord Beaconsfield had stated, in reply to a question from Lord Oranmore and Browne, that he did not consider it necessary to introduce any special enactment to suppress the meetings then being held in Ireland to prevent the payment of rent. The Peace Preservation Act, he said, had been drawn up to meet such evils.

with our foreign affairs, as if we were to take every opportunity of shifting, shuffling off, the responsibility which it is our duty as ministers to encounter. My lords, there is not an expression in the letter to which so much reference has been made which was not well weighed and sincerely felt. I believe the state of affairs is critical; and when I look at the condition of Europe, when I find these mighty hosts in battle-array, when I find increased armaments proposed, recommended, and agreed to with facility—if there were no other causes, these alone would make me impress upon my countrymen that this is not a time when vigilance can be neglected and when resolution can be—

"'Sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought.'

"The noble earl seemed to complain very much of my using the word 'ascendency,' and talked of my 'boasting of the ascendency which Her Majesty's government now possesses in Europe.' I said nothing of the kind. I only laid it down, as I do now, that England ought to possess *an influence, not to say an ascendency, in the councils of Europe.* I laid that down, but I did not say that we possess an ascendency. I said that the principle I have just enunciated should form the basis of a policy which a wise minister would pursue, and which he ought to endeavour to attain. There are causes why England does not possess that degree of influence and ascendency in the councils of Europe which I should desire her to possess. These causes are the conduct, not of the noble lord, who has always conducted himself as a statesman should, but *the conduct of those deeply connected in public life with the noble lord, who have held language which has impressed the courts of Europe and the people of Europe with the idea that there is a want of sympathy between the existing government and their countrymen;* and that if one of those trials should occur which demand the utmost development of national energy and the utmost display of national spirit, the government would appeal to their countrymen in vain. There is a great difference between *the word ascendency and the word supremacy.* The word ascendency is one which involves important moral actions, and is not a word of offence, but one which will always be accepted in a liberal and generous spirit. I maintain that, unless we take our place in the councils of Europe in a becoming manner, the peace of the world will be endangered. I maintain that the best security for possessing general peace lies in increasing and upholding the influence of this country. The opposite system has been tried by the ministry of which the noble lord was one of the ablest members, and what was the result? If we have had to encounter trouble and to meet great difficulties in Europe and Asia, those difficulties were *the consequence of the policy of those who preceded us.* That policy we have not followed. Our policy we have fairly put before the country, and its verdict will soon be given. If it is our fortune to remain upon these benches that policy will be pursued; but if the noble lord and his friends are destined to occupy our positions, I promise the noble lord that if the honour and the interest of England are ever concerned when he is minister, his government will be supported by the Tory party."

The matter then ended by Lord Stratheden withdrawing his motion, on the ground that the authenticity of the letter from the Ameer to the Sultan had been disputed.

And now once more, on the eve of a general election, the advocates of protection essayed to effect a breach in the citadel of Free Trade. The attack was led by the Duke of Rutland, ever the frank and consistent supporter of the commercial policy which preceded the repeal of the corn laws. It was his wish, said his Grace, to call the attention of the House to the depressed state of agriculture and trade, and to inquire how far it was owing to the present

system of free importations. It was a question which he feared might, in the hurry and turmoil of a general election, be overlooked, and yet none was of deeper importance to the country. He admitted that there had been a revival of trade, owing to a rise in the price of iron consequent upon a temporary demand for the article in America; but when such demand ceased iron would again decline and trade be as dull as before. Nor had the depression in trade been confined to iron, coal, cotton, or agriculture; every single interest had been depressed, and that not by accident but in consequence of the insane system of free importations. His Grace complained of the evils caused to special interests by the commercial treaty with France. That treaty he branded as a most one-sided arrangement. If nothing were done in the shape of retaliation to force France to take off her protective duties, it was absurd, he said, to suppose that there would be a revival of English trade. A revival of trade that would be lasting could only be effected by an alteration in the present unfair, unjust, and unequal arrangements.

Lord Beaconsfield deprecated the adoption of any hasty measures. "My noble friend the noble duke," he said (March 22, 1880), "when he last brought this subject before your lordships' consideration, had to dilate upon the commercial depression which then prevailed. On the part of Her Majesty's government I expressed our opinion that that commercial depression would not last long, and we saw signs which, though they might be deceptive, still in our opinion indicated a great revival in our commerce. The noble duke this evening has shown that there is a considerable improvement in our commerce. It is very true that my noble friend based his consolation upon the increased relations between this country and the United States; and though it is impossible for any one to deny that there has been a very great improvement in our trade with America, and although it is impossible to deny that our commercial relations amount at present to several millions more than they did twelve months ago, still the noble duke wished to impress upon your lordships that it was a sudden demand for one particular article which occasioned this improvement. Now, there I differ from my noble friend. The demand of the United States for iron has been very great, but I would venture to say that it is an error to suppose that there is not a general improvement. It is an error to suppose that our commerce, as regards iron, is confined to the United States. There are other states with whom we are now carrying on an active commerce in iron.

"Well, then, the noble duke having acknowledged the improvement in our trade, and having rested his illustration of our present position in that respect mainly upon one very important article of commerce—namely, iron—the noble duke warned us that we could not depend upon the continuance of our commerce in that respect, and intimated those views which he has always most consistently upheld and expressed. Upon that subject the noble duke, wishing to show the fallacy of what he regarded as the principle on which our commercial system is now established, took the case of France, and endeavoured to show that our commercial treaty with France had been one of immense benefit to France, but very slightly beneficial to this country.* But that, I venture to say, is an error of my noble friend. I have no doubt that the commercial treaty with France has been of vast advantage to this country. If it has not been of equal advantage to both countries, I maintain that

* "In order to bring his observations within a reasonable compass, he would confine his remarks to the effect of the commercial treaty which was entered into with France in 1860 at the instance of Mr. Cobden. The exports and imports of France in 1848 amounted to £72,000,000, while they amounted to £284,000,000 in 1879—a fact which showed beyond the possibility of doubt that she had largely benefited by the working of that treaty. But how had it affected England? In 1876 the value of English goods imported into France was £26,000,000, while the value of French goods imported into this country was £41,320,000, the value of French manufactured articles which we imported exceeding that of those which we sent her in return by £7,800,000."—*The Duke of Rutland, March* 22, 1880.

it has been of vast advantage to this country. But I must stop for a moment to remark that, if my noble friend wishes to advocate a commercial system based upon protection of native industry, he ought to a certain degree to be a supporter of the commercial treaty with France, because it is *a treaty entirely of reciprocity*, and there is no doubt that if that principle had not been adopted in the negotiations which led to the treaty, the commercial relations between France and this country would have remained probably much in the same state and of the same amount as they were before that treaty was entered into.

"The question of reciprocity and the question of protection are utterly different questions. If the whole nation chose to adopt a protective policy, nothing could resist that policy being carried into effect. But, with regard to reciprocity, I have always impressed upon those who brought it forward as a remedial measure that it was practically impossible; that we had altered our tariff to such an extent that it was by a chance that the British government were able to carry the French treaty into effect; and that, in fact, if the French treaty were continued, as I believed was the wish of many who are good judges of what is good for this country, there would be no materials by which we could adopt this principle of reciprocity on which my noble friend so much dilated, and which, it appears from some cheers, would be very popular in this House. *Popular or not, it is impossible.* You could not obtain it without the lapse of a considerable time, even if you swept away the whole of your present tariff. There are thirty or forty commercial treaties every clause in which would demand your attention, and considerable time would elapse during the negotiations.

"Now, the noble duke, after having admitted that commercial depression has disappeared, brought before your lordships the state of agriculture. No one can deny that there is great distress and depression in our agricultural condition. That is admitted by all classes. The question is—Is it in our power to relieve that distress? That is a question from which we ought not to shrink. My noble friend who spoke just before me said the remedy was, that there should be a further diminution of local taxation. Well, if it can be shown that there is still local taxation which is unjustly imposed upon real property, and not equally on all kinds of property, nobody who has confidence in the wisdom of parliament and in its sense of duty, can doubt that, if a fair case be made out, parliament will give relief in that respect. Parliament has already shown that it sympathizes with that class of property in this country which was subject to taxation from which all other classes of property were exempt. And if it can be fairly demonstrated that there are still taxes levied, not on agriculture only, but on real property which may exist in towns, I have no doubt that, general election or not, the sense of duty which influences members of parliament will induce them to do what is right in that matter. But I must say that I do not think that any further remission of local taxation, though it may be just, could be offered as a remedy at all adequate to the distress from which the agricultural world is now suffering.

"Now it appears to me that there are many things which may be done, which require consideration no doubt, but which appear to me to be accepted by the general opinion of the country as the result of discussion, debate, and public writing, which may very much facilitate the improvement of the soil, and, by facilitating the improvement of the soil, may benefit the occupiers of the soil. Whether we consider the question of removing the restrictions on its cultivation or that most important point as to which I introduced in the other House of parliament a remedy—namely, the securing for a tenant a complete protection for the capital which he has invested on the farm which he occupies—I think myself

that before we can beneficially act to relieve and improve the agriculture of this country, the agriculture of this country must be in a normal condition, and that it would be most unwise in a moment of distress to hurry a measure when we are not dealing with the land of England in its usual state. I think it must be acknowledged by all that it is not so much competition, it is not so much local taxation, but what is infinitely more injurious and more powerful—namely, *an almost unprecedented series of disastrous seasons*—which has brought about the present unfortunate state of agriculture in England. That condition of the cultivators of the soil, however, is not a permanent one, and, as far as I can see, matters are tending towards improvement. All the evidences of nature that can guide us rather make us hope that we are about to enjoy a season of prosperity and abundance; and should this promise be fulfilled, the agricultural mind will be relieved from a great deal of the despondency and distress which at this moment paralyze, to a great degree, the energies of the farmer. Then will be the time to consider whether we cannot alter many things in the relations of the farmer with the landowner, and deal with other matters which do not now beneficially act upon his condition.

"Among the measures which might then be introduced are those which will place the local taxation of the country upon a just basis, should it be found unequal, and secure to the tenant complete protection for the capital which he has invested—a direction in which the Agricultural Holdings Bill, which from all one hears appears to have received but very scant justice at the hands of those who opposed it, proposed, at all events, to commence to advance. When the normal character of English agriculture has been restored, we shall be able to form some more correct estimate of the degree of competition which it has to encounter from the importation of the produce of foreign countries. I must confess that, although I have read much concerning the estimates which have been put forward with regard to the prospective productions of the American continent, I have not arrived at those definite conclusions on the subject which some of my friends have adopted. We require more *data*, more opportunities for examination, and more experience before we can come to any decided opinion as to the effect of the importation of foreign-grown corn upon our home produce. When the English farmer has been blessed with a harvest worthy of his industry, and when we have gained greater experience of the effect of the produce of other countries upon our own, then will be the time for us to consider a variety of measures which undoubtedly may not appear very important in themselves, but which will, in the aggregate, place him in a more advantageous and improved position than he now occupies. By adopting that course we shall be able to look back with satisfaction, when these times of depression are passed, to the fact that we were guided by the dictates of prudence, and did not rush into hasty legislation.

"I know that it may be said that it is very easy to preach patience to those who are suffering. Nobody can esteem more than I do the character and endurance of the British farmer. I think that the patience and the high spirit with which he has borne up against a series of disastrous seasons, the few complaints he has made notwithstanding the great suffering he has experienced, exhibit his conduct in a light in which it is impossible to view it without a feeling of admiration. Whatever may happen, the cultivator of the soil still forms the largest class of the industrial world, and he is the greatest employer of labour; and your lordships and the country are bound to him by those ties which the traditions and the pleasantness of his occupation and his good conduct and loyalty have rendered so strong. Aristotle says that the agricultural class is the least given to sedition. That we have found in England, and we have at the same time found among that class some of the best exemplars not only

of moral life, but of that duty to the sovereign and that strict performance of public duty which have given such a very high character to this country. My lords, when we meet again I hope we shall do so with a less gloomy feeling with regard to the fortunes of our agricultural friends. I do not think that I could recommend any change in our law affecting the agricultural interest that might be brought about by hasty legislation. Her Majesty has appointed a royal commission, which is now engaged in examining into this subject, and from the labours of that body I augur considerable results. I think that from them we shall obtain much information as to the productive powers of the American continent which may guide us in our decision with great advantage, and that they will also lay before us the opinions of some of the most experienced and practical men in England as to the conditions under which the cultivation of the soil can be most beneficially carried on. My lords, I shall be deeply disappointed if one result of the labours of that commission is not to afford the farmer the most complete and absolute security for the capital which he has invested in the cultivation of the land."

Two days after this speech parliament was prorogued by commission. "I cannot part from you," said Her Majesty, "without expressing my deep sense of the zeal and ability which, during more than six years, you have consistently displayed in exercising your important functions, nor without tendering to you my warm acknowledgments for the useful measures which you have submitted for my acceptance, and especially for the manner in which you have upheld a policy, the object of which was at once to defend my empire and secure the general peace."

As the rival camps examined their forces and prepared for action, no indication was afforded as to the result of the impending battle. Both sides appeared equally strong, equally popular, and equally confident of victory. Yet never were appearances more fallacious. It was one of those occasions when a severe struggle was expected between the combatants, the issue of which no one dared to predict; and then, to the surprise of all concerned, instead of a contest there was only a collapse. From the first day of the polling to the completion of the returns for all the constituencies, the progress of the Liberals, both in the boroughs and the counties, was one series of easy triumphs. As the general election proceeded it was not difficult to ascertain the causes which had led to the reversal of opinion. The Liberals were no longer the divided and mutinous party of former days. Treaties of amity had been entered into among the disaffected, and all feuds had been buried in the one general effort to oust Conservatism from the place of power. The Nonconformists had made their peace with Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Forster, and such an accession of strength was in itself alone sufficient to turn the scale against the ministerialists. The Home Rulers, whom the manifesto of Lord Beaconsfield had keenly offended, went over as a body to swell the following of Mr. Gladstone. The exclusive Whigs, too, found themselves in curious company, for the extreme Radicals had agreed among themselves to give their support to the Liberalism which it was their intention on the first opportunity to blacken and develop into a dangerous Republicanism. A considerable section of business men, whose political opinions had hitherto been undecided, now pronounced in favour of Mr. Gladstone, owing to the water bill which had been introduced by Mr. Cross—a measure loudly decried at the time, but which recent calculations now prove to have been a just and temperate estimate for the purchase of a monopoly by the government. To these additions to the Liberal ranks must also be included those special interests which, in seasons of adversity, invariably attribute their misfortunes to the ruling of the party in power, together with that large vacillating community which loves change for the sake

of change, and ever votes against a government after any lengthy tenure of office.

On the other hand, the Conservatives had to content themselves, for the desertion of many of their late supporters, with the co-operation of the Roman Catholics, whom the extraordinary pamphlets of Mr. Gladstone had offended, and with a large section of the Hebrew body, who had warmly approved of the foreign policy of Lord Beaconsfield. Against such odds it was hopeless for Conservatism, however active or united, to contend. The verdict of 1874 was completely reversed, and the Liberals were once more the dominant party in the state. A comparison between the two parliaments illustrates the result of the struggle. The composition of the dissolved parliament was 351 Conservatives, 250 Liberals, and 51 Home Rulers; in the new parliament the composition was 349 Liberals, 243 Conservatives, and 60 Home Rulers. The Liberals had been much indebted for their victory to the working of the "caucus" system, and it was said that the Farmers' Alliance had been instrumental in causing the counties to revolt.

After so marked an expression of the political feeling of the country, it was useless for the Conservative cabinet to meet the new parliament. Lord Beaconsfield and his colleagues resigned their offices, and after a brief delay a Liberal administration was formed, with Mr. Gladstone as prime minister.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE LIBERAL POLICY.

THE administration formed by the incoming prime minister was both strong and representative. Save one or two exceptions, it was composed of all that was eminent among the Liberal party. Mr. Gladstone added to his duties as leader of the cabinet those of finance minister; Lord Granville was foreign secretary; Lord Hartington was secretary for India; Lord Northbrook was first lord of the admiralty; Mr. Childers was secretary for war; Mr. Forster contented himself with the post of Irish secretary; Lord Selborne was lord chancellor. All these politicians had held office in the former Gladstone government. As a reward for the extreme Radical support accorded to the Liberals during the election, Mr. Chamberlain, who had exhibited great administrative ability at Birmingham, coupled with much political intolerance, was offered a seat in the cabinet as president of the Board of Trade. Mr. Fawcett held the seals as postmaster-general, whilst his fellow Radical, Sir Charles Dilke of civil list notoriety, went to the foreign office as under secretary of state for foreign affairs. At the home office was Sir William Harcourt; Lord Kimberley, who had approved of the colonial policy of Lord Carnarvon, was secretary for the colonies; the Duke of Argyll, who might have been mischievous at the India office, was harmless as lord privy seal; Mr. Bright, who had always disapproved of sinecures, undertook the arduous duties of chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster; Mr. Adam was commissioner of works; and Lord Lytton, having resigned his post as soon as the result of the elections was known, was succeeded as governor-general of India by the Marquis of Ripon. From this catalogue there were certain omissions of well-remembered names. Mr. Lowe was not permitted to mismanage the finances, or to endanger a cabinet by the indulgence of his personal antipathies, but had to content himself with exclusion and a viscount's coronet. Mr. Goschen, who still differed from his party as to the degradation of the franchise, did not hold office, but shortly after the formation of the cabinet was sent east, on the retirement of Sir Henry Layard, as special ambassador to Constantinople. Of Lord Cardwell nothing was heard, probably because he did not approve of the development upon which Liberalism had now entered. The name of Lord Aberdare was also among the omitted. If the policy of Lord Beaconsfield was to be reversed, no better agents could be found than those who now swore fealty to Mr. Gladstone.

The first acts of the new government were not encouraging. Mr. Fawcett, with that aggressiveness which a terrible physical infirmity so often stimulates, had accused Lord Cranbrook of being aware of the existence of a deficit in the Indian budget at the very time when he as secretary for India was stating he had a surplus in hand; and the postmaster-general had felt himself bound, though very ungraciously, to offer an apology for the groundless accusation. The conduct of Mr. Gladstone was equally gross and inexcusable. Ever since the development of the Eastern question had compelled Austria to frame a foreign policy of her own, she had encountered the keen dislike of our Radical premier. Mr. Gladstone had detested Austria from the first, on account of her despotism towards Italy, and since events had now caused her to be the prominent foe of any pan-Slavonic movement,

and of that burlesque of all forms of faith, the Greek Church, his hatred towards the house of Hapsburg had deepened in its intensity. During his memorable Midlothian campaign Mr. Gladstone had permitted himself to be so far carried away by the fervour of his rancour as to assert that Austria—a power with whom we were on terms of amity—had ever been the unflinching foe of freedom in every country of Europe. "You cannot put your finger," said Mr. Gladstone, "on any part of the map, and say, 'Here Austria has done good.'" Such a statement—totally opposed to the facts of history—naturally led to much comment, and was strongly resented at the Austrian court. A correspondence ensued between Count Karolyi, the Austrian ambassador, and Mr. Gladstone, and the result was that the latter had no alternative but to withdraw his hostile observations. The excuses of Mr. Gladstone for the assertion were very lame; he was assured, he explained, on what he considered excellent authority, that Austria had designs on Constantinople, that she intended to go beyond the clauses of the treaty of Berlin, and that she was opposed to the liberty to be enjoyed by the emancipated populations. "I will not conceal from your Excellency," wrote the now abject prime minister, meekly eating his words before the frown of a foreign power, "that grave apprehensions had been excited in my mind lest Austria should play a part in the Balkan peninsula hostile to the freedom of the emancipated populations, and to the reasonable and warranted hopes of the subjects of the Sultan. These apprehensions were founded, it is true"—what an admission for a *statesman* to make!—"upon secondary evidence; but it was not the evidence of hostile witnesses, and it was the best at my command. Your Excellency is now good enough to assure me that your government has no desire whatever to extend or add to the rights it has acquired under the treaty of Berlin, and that any such extension would be actually prejudicial to Austria-Hungary. Permit me at once to state to your Excellency that had I been in possession of such an assurance as I have now been able to receive"—yet was it not the business of Mr. Gladstone, both as a politician and a gentleman, to have been convinced of the truth of his information before he drew his conclusions?—"I never would have uttered any one of the words which your Excellency justly describes as of a painful and wounding character. Whether it was my misfortune or my fault that I was not so supplied I will not now attempt to determine, but will at once express my serious concern that I should in default of it have been led to refer to transactions of an earlier period, or to use terms of censure which I can now wholly banish from my mind." Not without justice was this apologetic epistle described by Lord George Hamilton as "shameful and shameless." Contrast it with the manner in which Lord Beaconsfield, through a brief paragraph in the *Times*, repudiated the application of his phrase about "arbitrary arrests and domiciliary visits" to Germany, and even the blindest admirer of Mr. Gladstone can scarcely admit that the comparison is in favour of his idol.

The Houses met for the despatch of public business. The earlier part of the month had been occupied with the usual parliamentary preliminaries and with the degrading Bradlaugh episode—May 20, 1880. The speech from the throne excited the usual curiosity, without satisfying it. The treaty of Berlin was to be carried out. "The cordial relations which I hold," said Her Majesty, "with all the other powers of Europe will, I trust, enable me to promote, in concert with them, the early and complete fulfilment of the treaty of Berlin with respect to effectual reforms and equal laws in Turkey, as well as to such territorial questions as have not yet been settled in conformity with the provisions of that treaty. I regard such a fulfilment as essential for the avoidance of further

complications in the East. In accordance with this view I have deemed it expedient to despatch an ambassador-extraordinary to the court of the Sultan." Affairs in Afghan were not to be neglected. The efforts of the government would "be unceasingly directed towards the pacification of Afghanistan, and towards the establishment of such institutions as may be found best fitted to secure the independence of its people, and to restore their friendly relations with my Indian empire." The Conservative policy as to South Africa was to be maintained. "I have continued to commend to the favourable consideration of the authorities and of the people in the various settlements the project of confederation. In maintaining my supremacy over the Transvaal, with its diversified population, I desire both to make provision for the security of the indigenous races, and to extend to the European settlers institutions based on large and liberal principles of self-government." As regards Ireland the Peace Preservation Act was not to be renewed. "I am persuaded that the loyalty and good sense of my Irish subjects," said Her Majesty, inspired by her prescient prime minister, "will justify me in relying on the provisions of the ordinary law, firmly administered, for the maintenance of peace and order." Though there was little time during the session available for useful legislation, still it was hoped to introduce measures which would end the controversies as to burials in churchyards and cemeteries, which would afford protection to the occupiers of land against ground game, and which would extend the borough franchise in Ireland. Such were the salient features of the speech from the throne.

In the debate on the address in the Upper House, Lord Beaconsfield, now the leader of the Opposition, took a prominent part. He was brief but inquisitive. He had heard with pleasure, he said (May 20, 1880), that the articles of the treaty of Berlin were to be carried out, and that "active measures" were to be taken by the government with that object. "It would, however," he remarked, "be satisfactory, in these circumstances, to know that we are to receive ample information as to the nature of the active measures which Her Majesty's government propose to take. 'Active measures' involve an epithet to which many interpretations may be applied; and as generally used it has been applicable in many cases to a state of affairs which the people of this country do not view with approbation, because measures so described have not unfrequently turned out to possess a bellicose character." Then as to the announcement that an ambassador-extraordinary had been sent to Constantinople, Lord Beaconsfield was also desirous of more particular information. "We all know," he said, "what an ambassador is. An ambassador is an officer known to the constitution. We know very well that whatever he does the ministers in England are responsible for his actions; and therefore we have all those checks and securities which are required when he is dealing with affairs of state upon which may depend important results. No one, for example, would venture to criticise Her Majesty's government if they had changed the ambassador who is at present at Constantinople for another individual who more entirely may have possessed their confidence. It is an act which would not be noticed in parliament. It would be the exercise of a prerogative which has never been questioned. It would not be noticed in parliament, and would not be alluded to in a speech from the throne. But an ambassador-extraordinary is a person invested with powers of an unlimited character, unless they are limited by instructions which I trust the noble earl [Lord Granville] will not refuse to lay on the table in the present case. An ambassador-extraordinary may be so unlimited in his powers that he may, unknown to this country, involve it in war by an act of his own completely, without any person being re-

sponsible for the act. And therefore, under these circumstances, we have a right to expect that Her Majesty's government will lay on the table the instructions which the ambassador-extraordinary may be supposed to possess."

Referring to the war in Afghanistan, Lord Beaconsfield was of opinion that if the policy of the late viceroy of India were pursued, a prompt and permanent settlement of the affairs in Afghanistan would be effected. "But I do not contemplate," he playfully remarked, "that that result is to be attained by the establishment of 'institutions' in that country. I think we have a right to inquire what those institutions are. Is there to be a House of Lords created there of Sirdars? Or is there to be, according to the doctrine of some ardent members of the present government, only one chamber, and that of a representative character? What are those institutions to be? Are they to be county boards? But it is not merely in Afghanistan," continued the critic, "that I find this. I find it also in South Africa, where a not unfavourable view is taken of our present position. There also there is a question of establishing institutions. Well, if the plan of the government for the settlement of Afghanistan and the quietude of South Africa is merely the establishment of institutions in the usual sense of the British nation, I must say that I prefer intrusting matters to Sir Frederick Roberts, our general there, or to any high commissioner who may at present be resident in the country."

To the suspension of the Peace Preservation Act in Ireland, then on the eve of its expiration, the leader of the Opposition was warmly opposed. He reminded the House that the late Conservative government had remodeled the original Peace Preservation Act, and that all the clauses which were supposed to abridge the rights of the Irish people had been studiously omitted. Yet, in the speech from the throne, it was stated that the principal reason for the repeal of that Act was its infringement of the rights of the subject. The government had been forgetful, and were evidently of opinion that the Peace Preservation Act then in force and about to be suspended was the original Act, with all its harsh and severe restrictions still in full play. Lord Beaconsfield objected to this suspension; and we who now live under a vacillating and resourceless administration, and watch and hear of the bloodthirsty yet useless deeds daily perpetrated across St. George's Channel under the reign of terrorism culpably allowed there to exist, see how sound and far-seeing were the objections of the late leader of the Conservative party to such suicidal reversal of policy. "I am not myself going," he said, "to resist any action on the part of Her Majesty's government to discontinue the Peace Preservation Act in Ireland. It is on their responsibility as a government that they must act. *I think it a serious step; I deprecate it;* but it is a step upon which the government, considering all the circumstances, must take upon their responsibility, and scarcely with the interference of parliament. What I do regret is that the result of the conduct of Her Majesty's government will be, *I fear, an increase of the agrarian outrages* which first brought the subject under the consideration of parliament, and the recurrence of an evil second only to agrarian outrages, and that is an autumnal session. I fear that you are only *postponing the consideration of a question which, in my mind, will force you to action.* Whether the Peace Preservation Act in its present form, as modified by the late government, would be adequate to the difficulties you may have to deal with—although I trust you will not have to encounter them—I cannot say. But I think it would have been a prudent act on the part of Her Majesty's ministers, considering that it was their own legislation originally, and considering that their successors modified it in those points which are now alleged as a reason for its repeal—I say I think it would, under these circumstances, have been *a prudent act, and one which would*

have been approved by the country and by parliament, had Her Majesty's government not thought fit to take the step which has been announced." Then, as to the accusation of Lord Spencer, who had said that if the Peace Preservation Act—which was to expire on the following June—was so necessary for the welfare of Ireland, the Conservatives had been culpably remiss in postponing its renewal. Lord Beaconsfield thus replied:—

"With regard to the serious charge which, according to the noble earl, we have incurred in taking no step for the continuing of the Act, had we, after the general election, sat on the seats now occupied by the noble earl and his friends, I would remind the noble earl that there would have been ample time to have moved the continuance of the Act, and *it would have been our duty to do so.* Whether for a longer or shorter time, whether with more modifications or not, that would have depended entirely on the information the government at that time possessed; but as an act of prudence, and an act as free from violence as any act of a repressive character can be, *I think it would have been wiser if Her Majesty's government had continued the Act in question.*

"My lords, I am glad that it is unnecessary for me to trouble you to-night at any length upon the address which has been proposed, and to which I willingly give my sanction. The change in the government may be alluded to because it is specifically mentioned in the first paragraph of the speech. If, my lords, I allude to it now, it is not on this occasion to introduce any controversy, to use any expression disparaging to our successful opponents, or in vindication of our past policy. But there is one reason why I refer to that event. This is the only occasion on which, on the part of the late advisers of the crown, I have had the opportunity of thanking this House for the great support which they gave to Her Majesty's ministers on every important occasion of state. They sustained and strengthened that self-confidence which becomes a great nation; and the House of Lords, on more than one occasion—as they have done on many occasions in the history of this country—proved that they were the guardians of the national honour, and were prepared to vindicate that power which, I believe, is the only sure basis of the prosperity of England."

In the course of the debate the queries advanced by Lord Beaconsfield were fully answered, and foreshadowed the policy the Liberal government in the future intended to pursue. In spite of the virulent hostility to the diplomacy of the Conservative party by the Liberals when in Opposition, little radical change was to be effected in the arrangement of foreign affairs. A special ambassador, said Lord Granville, had been sent to Constantinople to see that certain portions of the treaty of Berlin—the treaty so reviled by the late Opposition!—which related to Servia, Roumelia, and Bulgaria, were fully carried out. There were also the questions as to the rectification of the Greek frontier, the cession of territory to Montenegro, and the reforms in Armenia, to be settled. These matters would be arranged by a vigorous and concerted union with the great powers. "We desire," said Lord Granville, "the maintenance of the supremacy of the Sultan; we desire that the limitation to that supremacy should not be diminished as to territorial limits beyond what it is at present; but we do say that that supremacy must not be dissociated from a proper and a righteous government of the large populations subject to that rule"—as if Lord Beaconsfield had ever desired otherwise! Affairs in Afghan were not yet settled, but it was hoped that soon an arrangement would be effected which would secure the independence of the people of that country, and establish the foundation of future friendly relations towards ourselves. Touching South Africa, continued Lord Granville, the object of the government would be to bring about such a confederation of existing colonies as would be calculated to increase their

strength, and render them less dependent for their existence upon the aid of British arms. The assumption of the Transvaal by the British had rendered the government liable to obligations to its vast population which it would be impossible henceforth to disregard—we know how that promise was fulfilled. Nor was Sir Bartle Frere—in spite of the past diatribes of the Liberals against him and in spite of the Zulu war—to be recalled. With regard to Ireland, the Peace Preservation Act was a somewhat feeble one, and the government had come to the conclusion that the wiser course was not to renew it. "Her Majesty's government," said Lord Granville, "do feel their responsibility in this matter most strongly; they have weighed the subject as carefully as they can, and they have resolved that between the balance of advantage and disadvantage it is better to do away with this exceptional legislation, in the hope that the people themselves will rightly respond to the appeal that is thus made to them." These explanations having been offered, the address was agreed to, "and ordered to be presented to Her Majesty by the lords with white staves."

It was not to be expected, now that parliament was sitting, that the Karolyi-Gladstone episode would pass unnoticed. Mr. Gladstone, in his electioneering speeches, had too freely indulged in vituperation to allow his own shortcomings to be mercifully dealt with. Political enemies who read his humiliating letter to the Austrian ambassador were too mindful of charges flung at the leaders of the Conservative party, of servility to foreign powers, of hasty and unsound statements only advanced to be meekly withdrawn, and of bluster when challenged only to be followed by confusion, to feel inclined towards generosity—especially to a foe who was never generous. The matter was introduced to the attention of the Peers by Lord de L'Isle and Dudley. The apology of Mr. Gladstone had been made public, but the letter of Count Karolyi which had forced the humiliating reply from the prime minister, was still among the undisclosed state papers. Lord de L'Isle therefore moved—since "the letter to which I allude is one which is without precedent in the annals of the history of the country"—that the *whole* of the correspondence which had recently passed between the Austrian ambassador and the first lord of the Treasury should be laid before the country. It was also pointed out that Mr. Gladstone had not withdrawn his accusation, and it was feared that his jealousy of Austria might prejudice our foreign policy.

Lord Salisbury supported the motion. He agreed with the description passed upon the letter of Mr. Gladstone by Lord George Hamilton, that it was "shameful and shameless." Nothing was more groundless and gratuitous than the charge of Mr. Gladstone against Austria. "What was the accusation?" asked Lord Salisbury. "That you could not put your finger on any part of the map and say, 'Here Austria has done good;' that Austria had been everywhere the enemy of freedom, while Russia, though sometimes not the friend of freedom, had shown herself the friend of Slavonic freedom; but Austria was not even the friend of Slavonic freedom. It is astounding," commented the critic, "that any man who has read the history of Poland, and knows that even now the government of Poland is a terrible blot on the civilization of the nineteenth century, should make such a statement; but it is still stranger that a man who was about to become prime minister should say that Russia was the friend of Slavonic freedom. . . . Austria is now, and has been since 1867, a free constitutional state, and instead of being the enemy of Slavonic freedom, has been the friend of that freedom. She has given what Russia never will give—parliamentary institutions to ten millions of Slavs." Lord Salisbury failed to see on what possible basis of fact Mr. Gladstone could have raised such an

accusation against Austria. Nor was the letter of apology satisfactory. The accusation had not been withdrawn. "Mr. Gladstone," continued Lord Salisbury, "only promised not to make the accusation again, and said he would not defend it; but the gist of his letter was this:—'I believe that Austria, in spite of her recent signature, intended to seek territorial advantages beyond those given her by the treaty. I thought I was justified in acting on that belief until the statement on which it was founded was contradicted; and because that statement was not contradicted, and because I entertained that belief, therefore I accused Austria of being everywhere hostile to freedom.'" But the statement that Austria was hostile to freedom had not been withdrawn, remarked Lord Salisbury; the imputation remained where it was. All that Mr. Gladstone had done was to promise, in recognition of the assurance given him by Count Karolyi that Austria would not advance beyond where she now stood, that he would not renew the accusation. "I think," concluded Lord Salisbury, "if it was necessary, Mr. Gladstone having made this mistake, that he should apologize for it, he should have apologized in a manner less humiliating to England, and more satisfactory to Austria. He might have simply said in his place in parliament that he had been hurried away —as he undoubtedly was—by the heat of electioneering speeches."

Lord Beaconsfield took a brief part in the debate. He said but a few words, and was very lenient. Had the position been reversed; had Lord Beaconsfield been the culprit and Mr. Gladstone the critic, how virulent would have been the vituperation! The leader of the Opposition was of opinion (May 21, 1880), that the Peers were only doing their duty in taking notice of so extraordinary a document. He himself would have alluded to it on the meeting of parliament, only he thought it desirable that as little controversy as possible should be introduced in the discussion on the motion for the address in answer to the speech from the throne. What was the document in question? Did it not imply a policy hostile to Austria? The original interpretation put upon the character and conduct of Austria had not been withdrawn. It was said that the original speech was delivered during the heat of an election contest, but that was no satisfactory answer. Though it might be the passionate expression of a vindictive memory, which recalled the past of many years ago with reference to the history of Austria, that was an argument which did not really alter the state of the case. The fact still remained that a minister of the highest position in this country, at a time very critical, during negotiations on which ultimately the peace of Europe might depend, had spoken of one of the great powers of Europe in a manner which, if it faithfully represented the sentiments of that individual, must be most injurious to the course of the negotiations, so far as the influence of that power, which at least was once the ally of England, was concerned. The country must not be misled. It must not be supposed that because, by the interference of Count Karolyi, certain assurances had been extracted from the prime minister on that matter, the affair was entirely closed. "There is nothing in that answer," said Lord Beaconsfield, "though there are many expressions in the letter which are humiliating to this country, though there are many expressions which may be satisfactory to the honour of Austria, there is nothing in that answer which at all guards this country from future action, on the part of the minister, which may imperil the peace of Europe."

With this expression of opinion on the part of the Peers the matter ended. No reply was given to the question of Lord de L'Isle and Dudley, and when it was found that, in spite of the Midlothian strictures, the government were in active and friendly co-operation with Austria, the unpleasant subject was quietly permitted to drop.

A question now came up for final settlement which, ever since its introduction, had led to no little bitterness and ill-feeling among those outside the pale of the Church of England. It fell to the duty of the Peers to frame a measure "which would end the controversies as to burials in churchyards and cemeteries." The arguments of Mr. Osborne Morgan, constantly reiterated, had prepared the country for the change, and the task of drawing up the Burials Bill now devolved upon the lord chancellor. All the old reasons for and against the movement were again brought forward and warmly advocated. Still it was felt throughout the country that the painful controversy should be terminated, and some satisfactory conclusion arrived at. To attain this end a measure was proposed which, whilst meeting the demands of the Nonconformists at the same time made a concession to the clergy of the Church of England. The chief provision of the bill was that a burial in churchyard or graveyard might take place "at the option of the person having the charge of or being responsible for the same, either without any religious service or with such Christian and orderly service at the grave as such person shall think fit; and any person or persons who shall be thereunto invited, or be authorized by the person having the charge of or being responsible for such burial, may conduct such service or take part in any religious act thereat." It was also provided that the Anglican clergy should be relieved from the obligation to read the burial service over any sectary for whom it might be demanded.

The measure suffered the usual fate of all compromises, and encountered severe opposition from all quarters. Unfortunately, those who should have been the united opponents of the new Burials Bill were divided upon the subject: certain of the bishops, following the lead of the archbishop of Canterbury, held that if the measure became law, it would strengthen the position of the Church of England, and recall the dissenting bodies to that better mind which they had displayed in former times; whilst, on the other hand, several occupants of the bench maintained that the bill, if passed, would be "a dishonour to Almighty God," would expose "the Church of England to martyrdom," and would lead to "sacrilege and profaneness." The Conservative party, though several among them saw that no good purpose would be gained by voting against the bill, disapproved of the tendency of its clauses. "The civil right of burial in the churchyards," they said, "no one was called upon to contest. But those who held the churchyards held them for ecclesiastical purposes. The old and the new churchyards had received a distinct consecration to ecclesiastical uses and religious purposes with which the national church was associated. Religious liberty was not infringed by the present condition of things; the Nonconformists had no real grievance to complain of; nor if the bill was passed would the controversy be settled. How," it was asked, "could they have harmony and peace in the churchyards, if every one of the various sects in the country could introduce its own service there? it would be a license most unjust to the clergy, and be greatly felt by the laity." The words of Lord Cranbrook sank deep in many hearts, and expressed the feeling of several who were neither bigoted nor intolerant. "I hope, my lords," he said, "that while you leave the national church in her position, you will not consent to sap and mine that position. I do not see why those who have freely gone out from her, who have not been expelled from her pale, but have gone to seek what they deem a higher and better form of worship, as they have found their own chapels, should not also find their own graveyards. If they object to the Church of England services, I am quite ready to concede to them silent burial in her graveyards; but I trust, my lords, you will not, by this mode of mixing up different forms of religion, throw discredit upon all religion whatsoever."

Then the limitation of the measure only

to Christian services was objected to by the more advanced of the Liberal party as unnecessarily maintaining a shred of intolerance. The Liberation Society presented a memorial demanding the restriction to be omitted. If the right of burial in a parish churchyard, they said, was a matter of common citizenship, why accord privileges to Nonconformists which were to be denied to the Jew, the Positivist, and the Freethinker? How would they define the word Christian? "Is it wise," asked Lord Derby, who held this view, "to put into an Act of Parliament a term which you cannot define, and a restriction which you cannot enforce? You cannot deny to the Unitarian body the title of Christians; their services are undoubtedly Christian services; but the line of demarcation between at least a part of the Unitarian body and those who profess simple Theism is a very vague one. I hope that before this clause passes your lordships will ask yourselves whether the words 'Christian service' are capable of accurate definition for legal purposes. For instance, is a service non-Christian in which the name of the Founder of the Christian religion is not simply mentioned? Does it become non-Christian by mere omission? Questions of that kind would be disagreeable as well as difficult to have to argue in a court of law."

The most uncompromising opponent of the measure was, however, the Bishop of Lincoln. In the opinion of Dr. Wordsworth, the Burials Bill would be disastrous to church and state, and involve calamitous consequences to both. It was the thin end of the wedge. The political dissenter would doubtless be very thankful for the removal of his alleged grievance as to burial, and he would then have a good hope that parliament would next proceed to remove another grievance, which was the real grievance in the background—the Established Church of England. Let the House take warning from past events. "A similar measure," said the bishop, "to the present was passed in the year 1868 for the Church of Ireland. I have been assured by the primate of Ireland and bishop of 'Derry that it has been of no use at all in that country; and my lords, let us remember that it was followed in the next year by the disestablishment of that church, which was the most loyal body in that kingdom." Dr. Wordsworth concluded by moving, as an amendment, that the bill be read a second time that day three months. The amendment was opposed by the archbishop of Canterbury, who supported the government measure, deeming it calculated to strengthen the position of the Church of England. The motion of Dr. Wordsworth was defeated by a majority of twenty-five.

On the third reading of the bill (June 24, 1880) Lord Beaconsfield addressed the House. He began by regretting the divided opinions displayed by the Episcopal bench. "The bill," he said, "is one of very great difficulty, and the subject is rendered more perplexing under the disadvantage of the opinions given by the right reverend and the most reverend prelates, which are so contrary one to the other. I have not risen to oppose the third reading, though my opinion is unchanged as to its character. I think it is an unjust and an unwise bill, and I have not heard any arguments yet which have shown me that all the reasons which have been applied to the churchyards do not equally apply to the churches themselves. I have heard remarks on the subject, but I have heard no arguments against that view of the question. We have been told in the course of the debate something in reference to the Church of Ireland. It was said you disestablished the Church of Ireland, and that was a very much greater measure than this; and that although the Roman Catholics had for some years the privilege of using the parish churchyards, they never urged any claim to the possession of the churches. There may be various reasons for that course. Whatever may be said of the errors of the Roman Catholic Church, no one can impute to it a want of good taste; and the Protestant churches of Ire-

land are not such as those who appreciate the beauty of holiness would be particularly anxious to possess. That, probably, was one of the reasons why the Roman Catholic population of Ireland never laid any claim to those churches. But that will not apply to the churches of England, which are beautiful, and are made more beautiful every year by the devotion and the taste of the wealthy congregations of this country; but whether that devotion and taste will continue after this bill passes is, I think, very doubtful.

"This bill appears to me to be unjust for many reasons, and particularly for one primary one which no person has yet grappled with. Every ordained clergyman of the Church of England will be obliged to open the churchyards to all sects, while he is not to enjoy the use of their graveyards for his parishioners in the same parish; and I cannot understand how such inequality could be brought forward in a bill of this nature, which assumes that it is founded on justice and equality. This is not only an unjust bill, but an unwise one. We hear much about God's acre, and there are those who have called upon the House not to sanction the desecration of God's acre by allowing it to be used by people whose religious opinions do not agree with theirs. Then, again, there are others who complain of the great hardship they suffer from not being permitted to have a portion of God's acre. But though I trust that the hour may never arrive when the recognition of a Supreme Governor of this world will cease to be the profession of the inhabitants of this country, still, my lords, I cannot but feel that this institution of what is called God's acre is one which is really not adapted to the country which we inhabit, the times in which we live, and the spirit of the age. What I should like to see would be a settlement of this question by the shutting up of all God's acres throughout the country. I think the churchyard of the ordained minister and the graveyard of the dissenting minister alike are institutions which are very prejudicial to the health of the people of this country, and their health ought to be, if not the first, at any rate one of the first considerations of a statesman.

"Now we have been moving gradually in the direction of these views, and there has been for some years a notion, soon about to amount, I believe, to a conviction, that the institution of churchyards is one which is highly prejudicial to the public health. I think it would be a much wiser step if we were to say that the time has arrived, seeing the vast increase of population in this country and the increase which we may contemplate, when we should close all these churchyards, and when we should take steps for furnishing every community with a capacious and ample cemetery placed in a situation in which, while it would meet all the requirements of the society for which it was intended, would exercise no prejudicial influence on the public health. These are views which I am convinced are sound, and if they had been entertained, as ultimately they must be, and if the health of the country had been considered, there would have been no reason whatever for the legislation now before us, which in its ultimate consequences may be highly prejudicial to this country, and which tends, in my opinion, to keep alive feelings of opposition and mutual distrust among different classes of the population which it would be better to cause to subside and to discourage. Well, then, I may be asked, 'If these be really your opinions, why do you support this bill? If you think that it is a bill which in its ultimate consequences will be hostile to the interests of the Church of England, why are you allowing it to pass without opposition?' To this I must answer that *I support the bill with great regret, and only because, from what I have observed in this House, I am convinced that opposition would be fruitless, and fruitless opposition is a kind of opposition which I never care much to encourage.* If it be possible to fight what is called the battle of

the church at other times, it is quite impossible to stand up for a privilege which the ordained clergy of this country enjoy, and which, in my opinion, is exercised for the welfare and benefit of the country, when you find that you are opposed in such attempts by the prelates of the Church of England. When the two most reverend prelates, and at least half the Episcopal bench, support a particular course, you cannot persuade the country that in resisting a proposal sanctioned by such high authority you are actuated by any but party or factious motives.

"I listened with great attention to the amendment of the right rev. prelate the bishop of Lincoln, and it appeared to me that a more able and earnest speech than that which he delivered was never addressed on this subject to your lordships. I entirely agreed with the right rev. prelate, and I thought to myself the effect that he has produced is so decided, and the balance of opinions upon subjects of this kind is so equal, that it will be well to take the opinion of the House before coming to a decision on this measure. But when I found the right rev. prelate was answered immediately by the highest authority in the House on such a subject, I felt that it would be utterly impossible in the circumstances to resist the appeal of the most rev. prelate. *This is why I think it is in vain to attempt to prevent the progress of this measure.* The measure, I feel, in any circumstances would have been a harsh and unjust measure, though there could have been reasons of state which would have justified it. It is necessary sometimes to make proposals in politics which are unjust to a very considerable section of the community in consequence of the demands of the public welfare. But here it was otherwise. I feel, however, that resistance was impossible, and that, in these circumstances, what we should most desire would be that the bill should pass and should be sent to the other House with those modified clauses in it which have been introduced by the lord chancellor and other members of your lordships' House. If they—as I cannot doubt—bear some balm to the injured feelings of the great body of the clery of the country, I think it highly desirable that they should be passed. But even if they pass, I cannot but express my regret that this bill should have ever been introduced, or that there should have been ever any necessity to have recourse to such legislation. It is, in my mind, legislation which is opposed to the circumstances in which we live. I think the direction in which we ought to have moved would have been to shut all these churchyards and graveyards, and to have assisted the government in some adequate proposal which would have furnished the country with cemeteries in which none of these painful controversies could have occurred, and which would have conduced to the preservation of the health and welfare of the country."

After a few words from Lord Granville, stating if the advice of the leader of the Opposition were accepted it would involve the closing of 12,000 churchyards, many of which were in country districts, and in a condition not unsanitary, the Burials Bill was read a third time, and passed. Its passage through the House of Commons was very rapid. The bill was intrusted to Mr. Osborne Morgan, and led to much animated discussion. The limitation to Christian services was warmly contested, and only carried by a majority of three. The Peers had introduced an amendment to the effect, that the concession to Dissenters should not apply where there was an unconsecrated burial-ground in the parish. This amendment was, however, rejected by a large majority. No dispute arose between the two Houses upon the subject, and late in the session the bill became law.

It must be admitted that none of the evils anticipated by the opponents of the measure have as yet been realized. At the grave side of those outside the pale of the Church of England nothing of the irrever-

ence and indecency so confidently foretold has been exhibited; Nonconformists, Deists, Jews, and Freethinkers have been interred without their sepulture giving rise to any objectionable manifestation whatever. The clauses relieving the clergy of the Church of England from the duty of administering the rite of burial over the bodies of persons who have not died in the odour of sanctity, or who have declined to accept the ministrations of the Anglican clergy in their lifetime, have been appreciated by all save the fanatical and the narrow-minded. A sentimental grievance on the part of the Dissenters has been redressed, and we have yet to learn that it has in any way placed the established church in jeopardy. We have but permitted the same state of things to exist in England which has long been the law of the land in France, in Austria, and in Hungary. The statement made by Lord Selborne when introducing the measure has still to be disproved. "I feel sure," said the lord chancellor, "that no new danger will be added by this measure, and I hope and believe that by it a danger will be removed. I commend it to your lordships as a measure founded, in intention certainly, and as I believe, in fact, upon principles of justice and charity, upon a sound view of the true interest of the church, and containing nothing inconsistent with her real principles. I commend it as a measure calculated, as far as it goes—certainly much more calculated than the present state of things—to promote the object for which we daily pray before commencing our deliberations, when we ask God to unite and knit together the hearts of all Her Majesty's subjects in true Christian love and charity one towards another."

The question of Ireland was, however, the one great question of the session, and cast into the shade all other topics—the claim of Mr. Bradlaugh to "affirm," the details of the budget, that sublime measure the hares and rabbits bill, local option, the employers' liability bill, and the rest of the legislative labours which, under less exciting circumstances, might have attracted considerable attention. In the terrible state of disaffection into which Ireland had then fallen, all public interest was absorbed. Inspired by the degrading counsels of the secret societies, and by the nefarious teaching of the Land League, the Irish tenant made open war upon his landlord. He refused to pay his rent unless his demands were satisfied; if evicted, it was death to any one to succeed him in his holding, and the unhappy landlord was either deprived of all labour at the very time his lands needed it most, or mercilessly shot down as he was returning from market or from petty sessions. Murder, mutilation of stock, the burning of hay-ricks and homesteads, and that peculiar form of oppression and isolation known as "boycotting," these were the weapons by which an embittered but short-sighted peasantry sought to attain the ends they had in view. The government, weak and irresolute, and in no little measure intimidated by the action of the Home Rulers, instead of adopting a stern and uncompromising course, coquetted with their opponents, and pandered to the suggestions of the Land Leaguers. Had ministers been resolute from the first; had they established martial law in the disaffected districts; had they dealt out swift punishment to the assassin, the agitator, and the incendiary; had they, in short, treated the mutinous Irish as they had five lustres back treated the mutinous sepoys—much of the evils which subsequently ensued would have been avoided.

The government, however, preferred conciliation to coercion, when coercion was the only policy that could have been effectual; and the results of that false move are still, as we write, even painfully apparent. At the suggestion of the Irish members, certain clauses in the Land Act of 1870 were to be amended, and the government, being led instead of leading, introduced a bill for the relief of distress in Ireland. The main provision of the measure was the authorizing the employment of £750,000 out of the

Irish Church surplus in loans to landlords and others for relief works. This conciliatory concession, in spite of encountering some opposition from the Home Rulers, who objected to the granting of any more loans to landlords, was rapidly carried through committee. It had been proposed to incorporate with this relief bill a new clause—known afterwards as the Irish compensation for disturbance bill—which awarded compensation for disturbance in cases of ejectment for non-payment of rent; in other words, eviction for non-payment of rent, under certain conditions, was to be considered a "disturbance" within the meaning of the Land Act of 1870, and the evicted person was to be entitled accordingly to compensation. From the moment of its announcement this new ruling was keenly opposed, and it became necessary to separate the clause from the relief bill, and introduce it as a distinct measure. The relief of distress bill was accepted as law, but the passage of the compensation for disturbance bill through the House of Commons was opposed at every turn. It was characterized as an act of sheer confiscation, as a measure to relieve the distress of one class in Ireland at the expense of the other, and an attempt to excite the peasantry against the landlords. In defence the government said the bill was a necessity on account of the increase of evictions, and the only means, in the opinion of Mr. Gladstone, of preventing civil war. But why, it was pertinently asked, had evictions increased? Simply, it was answered, because of the anti-rent agitation; tenants were incited not to pay their rents, and consequently landlords had no alternative but to resort to eviction. Crush the teaching and the terrorism of the Land League, and evictions would soon cease. As the bill was discussed, various amendments were proposed and withdrawn, which led to no little difference of opinion among the Home Rulers, who threatened to vote against the measure unless their demands were complied with; finally, the third reading was carried, after a hot debate, by 303 to 237, and the bill was sent up to the House of Lords. It was notorious that the measure had been greatly indebted to the support of the Home Rulers, who, though they despised the bill, considered it a move in the right direction, and a step towards the abolition of landlordism. The Whigs held themselves aloof from the measure.

The labour of the House of Commons, however, had been all in vain. The Peers, in spite of the advocacy of Lord Granville and the Duke of Argyll, rejected the compensation for disturbance bill, after a two nights' debate, by an immense majority. The chief speaker on this occasion, and the one whose words most powerfully influenced the chamber, was certainly Lord Beaconsfield, who opposed the bill on the second reading. He totally objected to the principle of the measure, and would have none of it. It imposed, he said, amid the approving cheers of his audience, a burden upon a specific class, it brought insecurity into all kinds of transactions, and it delegated to a public officer the power of fixing the rents of the country. It was unsound, mischievous, and revolutionary.

"My lords," he said (August 3, 1880), "the measure we are called upon to consider to-night on the second reading is very brief in its terms. It consists of only three clauses, but they are clauses which in their consideration require some reference to the past, some deep attention to the urgent present, and scarcely can be touched upon without some speculation upon the consequences to which, if this bill is adopted, they will lead. My lords, the origin of the question of landlord and tenant in Ireland in modern days was the famous Devon Commission. In the report of that commission, drawn up by men of great ability, admirably qualified for their office, and one of the most valuable reports which was ever presented to the consideration of parliament—in that great source of information on a question the most complicated

probably of the public questions that can engage the attention of the Legislature, all the information which during subsequent years astonished, alarmed, and engaged the attention of the country, was furnished and is to be found.

"From the moment the report of the Devon Commission was presented to parliament for its consideration, there was a general feeling among the public men of both the great parties of the state that the subject was one which would require legislation, and that legislation of a comprehensive and most careful character. To effect the improvements of the condition of the Irish people, there laid down as necessary, and at the same time to reconcile any changes that might be deemed expedient with that respect for the rights of property which all wise men know should be the only, or at least the main basis of liberty and civilization—these are the questions which engaged the attention of the late and the present generation. Some delay may have occurred in coming to any general conclusions on the matter, but that delay may have been occasioned, and was, no doubt, in a great degree occasioned, by the difficulty and the vastness of the questions which had to be considered; and was also occasioned, no doubt, by that system of party government in this country among whose many advantages may be accounted certainly not this, that it often leads to delay in the settlement of affairs of an exigent nature.

"But I may remind your lordships that as early as the year 1852, after some attempts had been made, but not of a very large character, to legislate for the state of Ireland, founded on the conclusions recommended by the Devon Commission, a government was formed in this country, of which I had the honour to be a member, which resolved to deal with this question, and if possible to grapple with it. I always read quotations from 'Hansard' with regret, but the quotation to which I am about to refer is not long; it offers no opinion, but at the same time it expresses in so condensed a form the situation of the question of the state of Ireland with respect to the Devon Commission that I hope your lordships will permit me to read it."

Lord Beaconsfield then proceeded to read extracts from the speech he made in 1870 [related in its proper place in this work], to the effect that four bills had been introduced in 1852, in which the recommendations of the Devon Commission had been adopted, but that circumstances had happened which prevented those bills from passing, though in the interval between 1852 and 1860 every provision contained in those bills, with one important exception, had been passed piecemeal.

"We live in an age," continued Lord Beaconsfield, "so rapid that we have got into a habit of forgetting what took place as recently as five years ago, and the Devon Commission, which is one of the most important parliamentary events that ever occurred, and which has had the greatest influence upon the condition of the relations between landlord and tenant, and the general welfare of the empire, is probably known to few and forgotten by many. It was in 1870 that the Land Act was introduced in the House of Commons by the present prime minister. What was our conduct in Opposition upon that occasion? From the speeches of the noble duke [the Duke of Argyll] and other noble lords who have addressed the House, you would suppose the Tory party had never made the slightest effort to improve the condition of the people of Ireland. You would suppose that they had listened in mute silence or shown active opposition to every proposal which had ever been made on the subject, and that these proposals had only been made by Her Majesty's present government. On the contrary, I wish parliament to remember that we ourselves in 1852 brought forward four bills that would have formed a complete code for Ireland, founded upon the recommendations of the Devon Commission: that not one single recommendation

of that committee was omitted; and that the course of legislation which afterwards brought about the same result as was then contemplated, though we had not the honour of initiating it, was universally supported by the Tory party; and lastly, that every improvement in the relations of landlord and tenant in Ireland that has taken place has been assisted by their parliamentary support and vote.

"What was our condition when the Land Act of 1870 was brought in? Why, my lords, we might, with a very clear conscience, have said, 'Our opinions are upon record upon the subject of the relations between landlord and tenant in Ireland; we have agreed to the recommendations of the Devon Commission, the highest authority upon the subject, and those recommendations have by our means and with our assent been universally adopted. This bill of 1870 which you bring in is one which appears to us to be unnecessary, when you have not rested a sufficient time to allow the great changes that have been passed to mature and bear those fruits which the country expect,' and we might, if necessary, have plausibly opposed the Act. But your lordships will find that that was not the course which we took in Opposition. On the contrary, though there were many provisions in the Act of 1870 of which we disapproved, the general policy of that Act was in harmony with the policy which we had always supported, and we consented to the second reading of the bill without opposition. It is very true that in committee we endeavoured to enforce those views which the government had not adopted, or rather the rejection of those opinions which the government ought not, according to our view, to have adopted; and it is true that a change was made in your Lordships' House, as I think a very salutary change; but it is upon record that the bill of 1870 was carried in the House of Commons without any resistance on the occasion of the second reading.

"Though there were provisions to which we had objection, still we were perfectly prepared—and upon that opinion we have always acted—to accept the bill as a final and conclusive settlement, believing that its final and conclusive character was one of its excellencies. The great object of all this legislation was to produce in Ireland that degree of tranquillity which would encourage the flow of capital from England and Scotland. Well, I believe that it did have a very considerable effect in inducing the introduction of new capital, and I am not prepared to say myself at the present moment that there is any portion of the Act of 1870 which I would wish now to be altered. But it is to be altered. We have this short bill put on the table. Now, when I read this bill I find in it three proposals. *I object to these three proposals. My first objection is because it imposes a burden upon a specific class;* it acknowledges that it has to deal with a national misfortune, and then, I think most illogically and most unwisely, it proceeds to say that the means by which it will try to remedy the unexpected evils that have occurred shall be means which shall have been furnished by only one class in Ireland, and that class not a numerous class, and above all a class that is suffering as well as the rest of the population. Well, I think the second objection to this bill is that it *introduces insecurity into all kinds of transactions;* and the third objection which I have is, that it appoints *a public functionary to whom it delegates the extraordinary power of fixing the rents of the country.*

"Now, these are three objections which appear upon the face of the bill, and which I think all must acknowledge—even those who may ultimately support the measure—to require considerable explanation and considerable hesitation before these proposals can be adopted. *They are violations of those principles of public policy which now have been recognized, practised, and pursued by parliament for half a century.* . . . "Well, my lords, this question naturally arises—You having introduced a

bill which contradicts all those principles of political and public economy of which you have hitherto been the avowed champions in the state, what is the reason you allege for doing so? What is the cause of the introduction of this measure? Now it is a most remarkable circumstance that the cause alleged is certainly, were it a true cause, one which no doubt must affect the feelings and opinions, perhaps, of many. We are told, and we are told by an authority that cannot be well exceeded, that this measure —which, though slight in form and brief in matter, is one which avowedly interferes with the rights of property—is brought forward in consequence of the fear which the government have that, if not passed, we shall have, perhaps, to encounter civil war in Ireland. My lords, I must say there is no member of your Lordships' House who would view the occurrence of any events in Ireland of that character with more profound sorrow than myself. These are not words of form. I was a member of a government that had to encounter something like a civil war in Ireland, and therefore I have some acquaintance with the feelings and responsibility which, under such circumstances, an individual would be subject to. I am sure, had it not been for the firmness of the noble duke who was then viceroy in Ireland, the great resources and courage of the ever-lamented Lord Mayo, and—though he is present, I cannot refrain from saying it, because justice requires it—had it not been for the ceaseless vigilance of my right honourable friend behind me, the noble viscount, who was then secretary of state [Lord Cranbrook], it is possible very great evils might have occurred. My lords, that insurrection, supported by a powerful and unprincipled foreign conspiracy, failed. It failed, and it terminated at the same time by the exercise of the authority and the clemency of the sovereign of this country, which, under similar circumstances, has never been exceeded or equalled. But if you ask me whether I could consent, for the sake of preventing disturbance of that kind in Ireland, to go forward and sacrifice, as the phrase is, the eternal principles of justice, I believe I should, under these circumstances, be prepared to say, 'I will not make that sacrifice.' And I believe that if civil war or any disturbance of that kind can only be prevented by the ministers of this country devising strange and fantastic schemes—which not only interfere with and invade the rights of property, but which lead, in my mind, to the very evil which they wish to prevent, and excite the multitude to the very catastrophe which they hold up to us as a warning—I should not shrink from that responsibility.

"But, my lords, it is a very strange thing that when we hear accounts given us that the country—that a part of the United Kingdom—is in such a state, that if this bill is not passed by parliament we must be prepared in a time—in a measurable time—for civil war, we have no evidence of this desperate state of things. I want to know what evidence has been given to parliament of the possibility of such a fearful state of affairs. We have not been led to believe that such a state of things was possible by the conduct of Her Majesty's government. When they advised Her Majesty to address her parliament at the beginning of the session, they put remarkable words into Her Majesty's speech. The passage has been read, and therefore I will decline to read it now; but I call your lordships' attention to this particular expression, 'But while determined to fulfil this sacred obligation'—which was to provide for the safety of the lives and property of Her Majesty's subjects—'I am persuaded that the loyalty and the good sense of my Irish subjects will justify me in relying on the provisions of the ordinary law, firmly administered, for the maintenance of peace and order.' Now that is a very peculiar expression—'ordinary law.' I do not remember ever having met it before in a royal speech, and therefore there was nothing in the royal speech which for a moment

would lead the people of this country to suppose that such a catastrophe as civil war in Ireland was possible.

"Well, what happened afterwards? The opening of Parliament took place. The government had the opportunity of intimating the fearful state of affairs in that country. They introduced a bill for Irish relief, but there was no indication whatever of *this* bill. They advised Her Majesty to issue a commission to inquire into the land laws; yet all this time elapsed, and the poor people of Great Britain had not the slightest idea of the danger they were in—not the slightest conception—while they were assured by the sovereign that the provisions of the ordinary law were all that Her Majesty required to defend their lives and property. When they heard of so innocent an affair as a royal commission to inquire into the land laws, not the slightest communication was made to parliament respecting the imminence of civil war. That is not the way in which parliament should be treated. In, I think, the year 1871, the year after the famous Land Act passed, the present secretary of state for India, then chief secretary for Ireland [Lord Hartington], came down to the House of Commons and gave a most fearful account of the state of Ireland, and proposed that there should be a secret committee to inquire into its condition. It is very true that the House ultimately resisted the secret committee, and insisted that its proceedings should be open, but that did not at all alter the opinion of the government that the revelations made to the committee were of a nature that ought to have been secret. Why have we no committee, if we are within a measurable distance of civil war in Ireland? Why have we not had communications made to parliament of this threatened civil war in Ireland? I think even the present House of Commons might have acceded to a secret committee in the circumstances. But neither the House of Commons nor your Lordships' House has had the slightest intimation upon the subject; and it is only when this measure is brought forward, originally introduced as a clause in a bill of charity, that you are informed by the prime minister you are within a measurable distance of civil war.

"My lords, I believe it is possible there may be disturbance in Ireland, and for this reason—because you have proposed this bill, and whether it be adopted or whether it is rejected, it is a measure calculated to excite the minds of an imaginative people; and if the distress, which I trust may be declining, proceeds in that country, I think it is not impossible that in consequence of the very measures brought forward to avoid civil conflict, you may find yourselves involved in trouble and disaster. There is one feature about the present agitation in Ireland which is most repulsive, and, I think, most dangerous. Agitation in Ireland is not a novel subject. During the last generation and the present it has been extremely active. It has taken many forms. It has been led by men of different characters and idiosyncrasies. It has taken the form of Repeal; it has taken the form of Fenianism; it has taken the form of Home Rule; and you may observe that all these movements had over them the varnish, no doubt but a mere varnish, of what may be called generous feeling. Even a Fenian was a patriot, or thought he was. When you had to encounter disaffection which was founded upon such transitory and superficial feeling, the government had a great advantage. The moment of material prosperity generally terminated the most active campaign for Repeal or for Home Rule. But if the present agitation is fostered in Ireland, and I believe 'this unhappy measure'—to adopt as classical the description which one of its chief supporters [Lord Emly] gave of it—will have that effect; if, I say, this agitation is fostered by the government, it is one which will not easily terminate, because it is an agitation addressed not to the romantic or imaginative, but, as the noble lord [the Marquis of Lansdowne, who had seceded

from the government rather than give his sanction to so mischievous a measure], who addressed us with so much power, so well expressed it, 'to the sordid instincts' of the Irish people. *An agitation conducted by men who have been taught to believe that the property of others ought to belong to them, and that if they exert themselves must belong to them*—an agitation conducted in such a spirit and for such a result, is one which Her Majesty's government will find more difficult to deal with than the agitations of previous years.

"The noble duke [the Duke of Argyll] who has just addressed us takes a very different view of these affairs. The noble duke appears to have studied the condition of the Irish people. He has given an interesting narrative to the House, though I am sure he is aware he made no statement which had not been made before, and adduced no facts with which the public mind was not familiar. If, however, I had entered the House at the time, I should not have guessed what was the subject of the debate from the speech of the noble duke. We are all agreed that the condition of Ireland is in some respects pitiable, and that the policy of England should be to elevate the condition of the Irish people. But we believe, also, that for the last fifty years, with almost a continuous effort, that has been the policy of England, pursued by both the great parties of the state. But I could gather from the arguments of the noble duke no inference of that nature. The noble duke said that there was extraordinary agricultural distress in Ireland. Well, it is possible there is. We will admit it. But I cannot understand that the best way of *alleviating the agricultural distress is by plundering the landlords.* The noble duke brought before the House a subject with which I think he should have dealt either with more reserve or with more frankness, and that was the argument for the necessity of the measure in consequence of there being bad landlords in Ireland, hard, heartless, tyrannical, and cruel. He should have been prepared either to give a detailed statement on that subject, to allege facts, to describe owners, to give names, or I think he should have left the matter alone. Here we are to-night, and the noble duke tells us there are 173,000 cottier tenants in Ireland, and then he says, 'Will you place these men at the mercy of a person who does so-and-so?' I did not catch the name of the person; I do not think the name was given; but the single instance of a bad landlord—and that an anonymous one—is supposed to affect the condition of 173,000 cottiers. There is no proportion between the case alleged by the noble duke and the remedy he recommends. I know he would not shrink in his view of public duty from making any statement on the subject. The noble duke commenced his speech by saying that he was going to charge like the 'Six Hundred' of Crimean fame. If he had been one of the Six Hundred at Balaclava, I have no doubt he would maintain his reputation for courage. I thought he had got in his mind," laughed Lord Beaconsfield, alluding to Birmingham, "another Six Hundred, connected with another place, which at least resembles Balaclava in its initial letter.

"I have now mentioned some of the causes why in my opinion this is a measure which it was unwise on the part of the government to bring forward, and why I am anxious that the bill should be rejected. I have shown that the question of the government of Ireland, and this question of the relations between the landlords and tenants of Ireland never were, never ought to have been, and I trust never will be party questions. I was therefore rejoiced to find that it was not left to the regular Opposition, whose motives might be, as they always are, misconstrued, to ask the opinion of your lordships on this grave subject. Notice was given to move the rejection of the bill by one who bears an illustrious name [Earl Grey]; and we learn that the noble earl did not stand alone, but that he had some,

perhaps many political friends, who sympathized with him. If the motion of the noble earl for the rejection of the bill had been one of which the tendency was in any degree to arrest that great policy, which now for nearly forty years has been supported by parliament, with respect to the relations of landlord and tenant in Ireland, I certainly should not have supported it. But brought forward as it is, I feel it is my duty to do so, and that the views of myself and my friends on this subject ought not to be misunderstood. I confess myself that there is one more reason which makes me anxious that this bill should be rejected; and that is, the mode in which it has been introduced to the notice of the country and of parliament. There have been rumours, ambiguous voices, circulated about for a considerable time that some large measure was about to be introduced, or would be in due time, which would affect the character of the landed constitution of the country. Sometimes it was to be a great measure for Ireland; sometimes we were assured upon authority, though not the highest, that England would not escape the careful consideration of Her Majesty's ministers. Upon every occasion there have always been some of their many supporters in parliament who have exulted at the introduction of the bill, and who have announced not only their hope, but their conviction that the ministers next year would deal in the same spirit, but in a far larger way, with the question of land in England.

"A gentleman [Mr. Chamberlain] the other day was summoned to one of the greatest honours of the state—to be a member of Her Majesty's privy council—he himself a distinguished member of parliament and one of the administration; and after he had taken his seat at the board, he went to another board, to a political dinner, presided over by no less a personage than the lord president of the council [Lord Spencer], and here the new privy councillor, in language of the most inflammatory character, denounced the land, denounced the landlords of England, and said they had got a majority of the cabinet in their favour, and next year there would be a complete revolution of the land laws. The lord president of the council on that occasion did not reply to his right honourable friend; but, as far as we can judge, the views of his right honourable friend had the moral support certainly of his presence, and, as we feared, of his convictions. *I know well there is a party hostile, and avowedly hostile, to that constitutional position which in our system of government had been accorded to the landed interest.* They are men who would sooner see a government established by the application of abstract principles than resting upon the influence of tradition and upon the strength that results from experience. I do not believe this is a numerous party, but it is an intellectual party. It is intelligent and persevering, and it is actuated by that enthusiasm which novelty inspires, and by all that energy which I believe is a characteristic of minorities. *This is the first time in the history of England that the leaders of this party have found a seat in the councils of the queen.*

"My lords, I look upon this bill as being what military men would call a reconnaissance in force. It is a reconnaissance in force to see what is the feeling of parliament and of the people of England upon the present tenure of land in England, and upon the constitutional position in our system of government of the landed interest. It has been a most effective reconnaissance, though I cannot say it has been a very successful one. If they wished to know what is the opinion of the colossal majority of 170 in the House of Commons gained at the last general election with regard to this subject, they have learned that two-thirds of the majority on that occasion either kept away or voted against them. They have learned, also, that the bill has been sent up to this House by a majority consisting merely of that section of the members of the House of Commons

who treat the bill itself avowedly with contempt, and who, with courageous candour, tell us they only adopt it because they consider it merely as a step to assist them in the transference of the soil from the legal possessor to the casual occupier.

"I know well that it is difficult to persuade some minds, that the opinions which are now circulated with great confidence are opinions that ought to be resisted by all those who love the greatness and the glory of their country. There is at the present day too great a tendency to believe that it is impossible to resist the progress of a new idea. There is a fashionable phrase now that everything is inevitable, and that every event is the production of a commanding cause of Nature which human will cannot resist. The despotism of public opinion is in everybody's mouth. But I should like to know, when we are called upon to bow to this public opinion, who will define public opinion. Any human conclusion that is arrived at with adequate knowledge and with sufficient thought is entitled to respect, and the public opinion of a great nation under such conditions is irresistible, and ought to be so. But what we call public opinion is generally public sentiment. We who live in this busy age and in this busy country know very well how few there are who can obtain even the knowledge necessary for the comprehension of great political subjects, and how much fewer there are who, having obtained that knowledge, can supply the thought which would mature it into opinion. No, my lords, it is public sentiment, not public opinion, and frequently it is public passion. My lords, you are now called upon to legislate in a heedless spirit, by false representations of what is called the public mind. This bill is only the first of a series, the results of which will be to change the character of this country and of the constitution of this country. The argument that you cannot stop upon this ground, urged by my noble and learned friend, has never been answered. If you intend to stop upon it you were not justified in making this proposition. The proposition is one I think most dangerous to the country, and I trust your lordships will this night reject it. If you do that you will do a deed for which your country will be grateful, and of which your posterity will be proud."

The House was of the same opinion as Lord Beaconsfield. The compensation for disturbance bill was rejected by a majority of 282 to 51.

During the remainder of the session Lord Beaconsfield took no part—save uttering a few words upon the employers' liability bill and the game bill introduced by the government—in the discussion of measures brought before the Peers. He was engaged in more congenial pursuits, and was once more wandering amid the pleasant paths of fiction. Rumour had long been busy with the report that the leader of the Opposition was amusing himself, during this period of political freedom, in writing one of those works which had first brought him into notice. A novel from the pen of Lord Beaconsfield was no small event in the literary world, and when "Endymion" appeared the excitement it created was one of the sensations of the year. The subject of the book was one always beloved by the author—the story of ambition encountering difficulties only to surmount them, and finally attaining to the highest posts which power can offer. Like its predecessors "Endymion" is a work of political fiction, and like its predecessors it contains a gallery of portraits easily identified with the originals, many charming descriptions of scenery, much brilliant dialogue, many shrewd and sarcastic observations upon the foibles of human nature, and a good deal of what is professionally termed "padding," which might have been omitted with advantage. It will be read because it was written by Lord Beaconsfield; but like "Lothair," it will add little to the literary reputation of the author of "Coningsby" and "Sybil."

CHAPTER XX.

FINIS.

We are now approaching the end of a long and distinguished life. Of late years the health of Lord Beaconsfield had given evident signs that the anxieties and labours of the past were beginning to tell upon a constitution, the chief strength of which lay in its marvellous nervous energy. At Berlin it was remarked that the great statesman looked pale and worn, and the attacks of gout, coupled with an affection of the bronchial organs, to which Lord Beaconsfield had been subject during the last two or three years, had tended all the more to enfeeble his frame and depress his vital forces. Still there was nothing in the physical state of the Conservative leader to create alarm among his friends, or to foreshadow that the end was nigh. In spite of a figure which now stooped a little more than had been its wont, and in spite of that wearied look about the eyes which ever denotes an exhausted old age, Lord Beaconsfield pursued his accustomed course of life without interruption and without apparent inconvenience. Since his wife's death he had been a frequent diner out, nor were such invitations now thought necessary to be refused. During the autumn he had paid his usual visits to the country houses he affected; when in town he could often be seen walking along the Strand—a street which he considered one of the finest in the world; and he still occupied himself with his customary activity in writing, reading, and collecting material for future parliamentary efforts.*

When the Houses met early in the year 1881 the leader of the Opposition was seated in his accustomed place, and no one anticipated that a few weeks after the assembling of parliament he would be called away, and his familiar presence be no more seen within the walls of St. Stephen's. Indeed, so far as intellectual activity was concerned, Lord Beaconsfield delivered few weightier or more closely reasoned speeches than those which fell from his lips during the three months which preceded his death. He certainly, as it was remarked, "looked old," as he rose to review the policy of the government in the debate on the address; but a man who is over seventy, who has spent the best part of fifty years in the active pursuit of literature and politics, who has never known what indolence was, and who has seldom indulged in what the medical fraternity call "rest," must expect to "look old." The marvel would have been had Lord Beaconsfield then looked anything else. Men were, however, so accustomed to his fire and energy, they were so habituated to the sight of that impassive face, those curling locks, and that slight, active figure, that they could

* "During his last years Lord Beaconsfield still took the keenest interest in political, literary, and social matters. For some time after the last dissolution of parliament he had no home in town except in the house of Mr. Alfred de Rothschild, who surrounded him with all that princely hospitality, tried, warm friendship, and cultivated taste could offer. His labours, however, continued unremitting. He suffered at intervals from attacks of asthma, which usually ended in gout. Dr. Kidd, in whom Lord Beaconsfield placed great confidence, was very frequently successful in subduing the advances of what the ever-amusing patient called 'the enemy,' and his skill would generally enable Lord Beaconsfield to return to his work with strength apparently but little diminished. Latterly, however, these attacks recurred with more frequency, and his friends rejoiced when he became possessed of a home in London, where he could gather them round him, and where his papers and his books would be collected and arranged. He was fortunate in finding one near the site of Chesterfield House, where he must have passed so many brilliant evenings in former times. He secured the lease for nine years, and in mentioning this to a friend added, with his own peculiar smile, 'That, I think, will see me out.'"—*Some Personal Recollections of the later years of Lord Beaconsfield, by Lady John Manners.*

not imagine a parliament without the presence of a Disraeli. His name had grown up with their growth, and had been so woven into the texture of the political history of their generation, that it seemed unaccountable for such history to continue unless inspired by his influence; and so men forgot, as they seemed ever sure of his presence and control, that they were depending upon the health and resources of a spent life—of a man who was well-nigh eighty years of age.

Yet in the speech of Lord Beaconsfield on the address (Jan. 7, 1881), there were no signs of waning vigour. The leader of the Opposition among the Peers spoke with his accustomed animation, and his voice had all its old charm of tone and vibration as it rang loud and clear through the chamber. During the autumn the Liberal government had set themselves to work to reverse the policy, both domestic and foreign, of the late Conservative administration. A conference had been assembled at Berlin with the alleged object of reconsidering the clauses of the Berlin treaty, but really and practically to modify and undo the work so satisfactorily settled by Lord Beaconsfield and his colleague. The questions of the Greek and Montenegrin frontiers had been decided upon; Turkey was obstinate as to ceding the districts demanded of her, and at one time it appeared as if it would be necessary for the powers to crush her obstinacy by having recourse to hostilities. At the moment when Lord Beaconsfield drew the attention of the Peers to affairs in the East, what with feuds between the Albanians and the Montenegrins, and the hatred between Turk and Greek, the situation was fraught with danger and pregnant with future warfare. Under Conservative rule Afghanistan had been brilliantly invaded, and its strongholds, necessary for the safety of our Indian frontier, occupied by British troops. Such advantages were now to be abandoned. In spite of the defeat of Ayoub Khan and the brilliant march of General Roberts from Cabul to Candahar, Mr. Gladstone had arrived at the suicidal conclusion that our hold upon Afghanistan should be withdrawn, and Candahar, the one fortress commanding the only route by which an invading army could approach India, be evacuated. In South Africa the Boers, encouraged by the speeches of Mr. Gladstone and his followers, who had condemned the annexation of the Transvaal, now deemed the accession of the Liberal party to power a fitting moment to break out into open revolt, and had risen as one man to defy English rule.

But nearer home heavier troubles afflicted us. The suppression of the Peace Preservation Act had brought about the evils predicted by Lord Beaconsfield. Never in the history of turbulent and ill-conditioned Ireland had murder and rebellion more openly stalked through the island, and been less prevented in carrying out their fell behests. The authority of the Crown was scandalously set at nought; inoffensive landlords and harmless women were shot down by masked ruffians, skulking behind the hedges of village roads; the payment of all rents was ordered to be withheld, by decree from the Land League, under pain of death; labour was paralyzed, juries were intimidated, and the whole country lay prostrate beneath an active yet unrestrained reign of terrorism. The government, vacillating and undetermined at first, did nothing; checked by Mr. Bright and Mr. Chamberlain, the representatives of a town which enriched itself by furnishing the Irish malcontents with arms, and who, regarding force as no remedy, had disapproved of all stringent coercive measures, ministers were in a state of the most helpless imbecility. To put down with the strong arm of special enactments the crime and cruelty allowed to run riot across St. George's Channel would be to lose the able counsels of the humane and far-seeing members for Birmingham. Rather perish Ireland, perish landlordism, suffer the counsels of the agitator and the deeds of

the assassin, let the innocent be cruelly wronged, and the cry of the widowed and the fatherless be ignored, than that the services of a Bright and a Chamberlain should be dispensed with!

So counselled the Gladstone cabinet, and during that terrible autumn of 1880 no preventive measures were adopted to silence the mischievous agitator, to restrain the aim of the murderer, and to limit the activity of the incendiary and the cattle-mutilator. Then matters came to a crisis, and the government felt itself compelled, even at the risk of parting with those of its colleagues who had advocated license and patronized confiscation, to adopt some decisive step to curb the lawlessness which had been permitted to prevail. The agitators were put upon their trial; the "boycotted" were assisted in gathering in their crops; and since the ordinary strength of the law had proved insufficient, parliament was to be asked for additional powers necessary for the vindication of order and public law. "There is a real reign of terror," said Mr. W. E. Forster, when introducing his protection bill, "over the whole country. Men dare not take a farm from which another person has been evicted, or work for a man who has paid his rent, or refuse to join the Land League. Men dare not buy from, or sell to, a person denounced by the Land League. Men dare not claim compensation for outrages committed upon them, or inform against persons who have actually committed outrages upon them, or prosecute even in cases in which, in the first moment of anger, they have given information. They dare not give evidence with regard to those outrages, either on their own behalf or on behalf of others; and when appointed on juries they dare not convict, even on their oath. The fact is, those who defy the existing law and break it are safe, whilst those who keep it—the honest men, in short—are in danger." What a commentary upon the statement made by Mr. Gladstone that Ireland had never been so prosperous or so generally contented as at the date of the change of ministry!

In the debate on the address Lord Beaconsfield reviewed the policy of the government, and complained of the conduct of the Liberals in endeavouring to undo what the Conservatives had effected. Emerging from the stormy sea of politics, the two rocks ahead—Ireland and the East—which Lord Beaconsfield had pointed out in his manifesto to the Duke of Marlborough, were now plainly visible, and it seemed as if the cabinet were steering straight towards them, and about to wreck the ship of the state intrusted to their care and command.

He agreed, began Lord Beaconsfield, with his noble friend and neighbour, Lord Carington, the mover of the address, that the times were critical; and although he was sure that their lordships were not pessimists, and although, whatever his own errors were, pessimism was not generally among the imputations made against him, he confessed he had never addressed parliament with a more deep sense of anxiety and gloom than that which the present state of affairs brought him to feel. There had been occasions on which their foreign affairs had filled the country with anxiety, occasions on which their colonial position had been very critical. There had been occasions on which their domestic interests, influenced by Ireland, filled the nation with alarm. There had been occasions also in which events had occurred which had demanded the serious attention of parliament, and which could not, perhaps, be ranged under the heads he had noticed. But he did not recollect a time in which, not only their foreign relations, not only their position in important colonies, not only the almost unparalleled state of their relations with Ireland, but the many other troubles which might require their attention that session, all at the same time had occurred, and had demanded the deepest consideration, the deepest sense of responsibility, on the part of their lordships.

"And, my lords," continued Lord Bea-

consfield, "I am bound to say that I cannot help feeling that much of the disaster with which we have to grapple at present, is to be attributed in a great degree to the spirit in which Her Majesty's present ministers acceded to office. In old days, in times within our experience, when there was a change of administration it was always considered the duty of both parties to effect no more alteration in the general conduct of our affairs than was absolutely necessary. On former occasions it was generally understood that though there ought to be, and of course there was, a due assertion of differences of party principle, still, so far as it was possible, unnecessary changes were to be discouraged in the general conduct of our affairs, so that there should be some continuity of policy; and though there were imputations made, I fear sometimes with justice, but often very unjustly, against our parliamentary government, of the inconsistency in which it involved our affairs, very frequently parliamentary government could not justly be open to that imputation. Well, my lords, it must be admitted that this action to which I have referred introduced some feeling of magnanimity into public life, and its absence is very much to be regretted. No doubt it added greatly to the strength of our functions. But when the new administration was formed nothing of the kind was done. On the contrary, in every manner and on every occasion it was announced that the change of government meant a change in every part and portion of the government; that *everything which had been concluded was to be repudiated;* that *everything consummated was to be reversed, and upon the most important questions, either of our foreign relations, our colonial situation, or our domestic policy with regard to Ireland, upon all these questions the utmost change must immediately and rapidly be accomplished.* Perpetual and complete reversal of all that had occurred was the order that was given and the profession that was announced.

"See, my lords, how this has worked. Take the case of our foreign relations. Everything was to be altered. Well, though you might denounce and abuse the treaty of Berlin, you could not repudiate that treaty, and you could not reverse it. The treaty of Berlin, being so completely disapproved of by the new government, it was proposed, most ingeniously, that, as there had been a congress at Berlin there should also be a conference at Berlin; and it was generally understood and felt by everyone that that meant that the regulations of the congress of Berlin were in fact to be modified, changed, and superseded by the determinations of the conference. Now, how has that been accomplished? In my observations to-night I will avoid arguing on matters of policy, for which there will be other occasions; but all sensible men will agree that, whatever may have been the defects of the treaty of Berlin—though I admit none—or the points that may have been neglected or left unsettled, one thing was quite clear and was generally admitted, that at last the peace of Europe was secured. I believe that the conference of Berlin had the contrary effect, and I think I am not using an unauthorized expression when I say that the result of that conference was that the war in the East of Europe and in the West of Asia was on the point of being revived, and England was near being a belligerent, and a belligerent too against our old ally. No one can say now that the peace of Europe is certain, or that we are perfectly secure. We have very little information on this subject, though I presume that more will be afforded; but from what we see there is no doubt that even in the space of twenty-four hours events may occur which might shake that peace. What is the cause of all this? It is because Her Majesty's government, *directly they took office, got into this system of superseding and disturbing everything their predecessors had settled.*

"Now let me advert to another question —that, namely, of Afghanistan. That is a

question that must come before the House, and I believe my noble friend the late governor-general of India will take an opportunity of bringing it before your lordships' notice. Whatever may be our opinion as to the policy or impolicy of the military occupation of Afghanistan, in this, I think, all will agree—that it was an event of great political moment, and that it was undertaken in consequence of information, part of which only has as yet been revealed to the country, but which is adequate to enable them to learn that it was preceded by startling incidents of conduct on the part of another great power, which demanded serious consideration. Her Majesty's government may be perfectly right in the views they take on the subject of Afghanistan. The occupation of that country may have been a most impolitic act, and it may be their duty to counteract its effect, and to terminate the policy that we attempted to establish. All this may be perfectly true, but all impartial persons will feel that such a step should be taken with great prudence, that it should be taken gradually, and that ministers ought not to have gone to the housetops to proclaim their peril to the world—their peril; I may rather say their perplexity. We must remember also that the military feat of the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan was no mean one. Rarely have the discipline and valour of our troops, both British and native, been more distinguished; and, above all, we have produced a general equal to any conjuncture of the war. These were all circumstances that won respect in Asia and Europe; but the ministers, as I say, go to the housetops to proclaim to every bazaar in the East that they do not know what to do, and that, after all this anxiety, they are going to scuttle out of the country as fast as they can.

"What I want your lordships chiefly to observe is the consequence of such conduct, which is of the most destructive and deleterious kind. It may have been our policy to quit Afghanistan; but if we quit it in this spirit, and after such declarations, every military adventurer feels, 'This is my opportunity: the British are going to leave this country, and I will succeed them as far as I can.' Clearly you have produced a state of anarchy, and at last you say that you will consummate your confession of impotence and blundering by giving up the city of Candahar. But why has all this taken place? Because there have been declarations made on the subject, declarations of the most unmeasured kind; because the country has been agitated to believe that the change of government would instantly terminate the dangerous occupation of Afghanistan; and because pledges made in total ignorance of the circumstances of the case have now to be redeemed at the cost of the credit of the country. Both in foreign affairs and in Afghanistan—in the one because the peace of Europe is no longer assured, but menaced, and in the other because Central Asia is in a state of anarchy—you have now to pay the cost of declarations made in a polemical, and not in a political sense, to the people of the country."

Then he proceeded to criticise the condition of Ireland.

"I must now," said Lord Beaconsfield, "touch on that subject which, after all, absorbs all our thoughts at the present moment, and that is the subject of Ireland. When the late government were responsible for the administration of affairs, the state of Ireland undoubtedly caused much anxiety. In ordinary circumstances, I believe the skilful administration of my noble friend near me would in no way have been disturbed; but we had a terrible visitation, and have at the same time to deal with a body of men who will take advantage of distress to render the work of government more difficult. Fortunately the famine was not as fatal as we once feared, and the measures taken by the government and supported by private charity almost unprecedented, which, under the direction of a noble lady [the Duchess of Marl-

borough], touched the hearts of the Irish for the time, gave us every hope that we might proceed without further disaster. The Peace Preservation Act certainly had a beneficial effect, and greatly assisted the government; and our opinion was, although we had before us information which is, no doubt, well known to the present ministers, that it would be possible to carry affairs safely through with the law that then existed, and that, with the mitigation of the calamity that then prevailed, we might grapple with the conspirators, who seek not merely separation from this country, but the establishment of an independent foreign power.

"Just before the general election I felt it my duty, occupying the position I then did, to place before the country issues which I thought were of vast importance, and which demanded at that critical time the consideration of the country. Not sitting in the other House of Parliament, and therefore not having the privilege of addressing my old constituents, as in old days, I thought it becoming to address to the lord-lieutenant of Ireland a letter, in which I called the attention of the country to the state of Ireland. I placed before the country only two points. I warned it to be most careful not to meddle thoughtlessly with foreign affairs, because I foresaw that if it did, there would be *a chance, and more than a chance, of a European war.* What has occurred has, I think, quite justified that warning; but we can at least hope that, a war not having occurred, Her Majesty's ministers may have been successful in preventing it. But as regards Ireland, in my letter to the lord-lieutenant, I warned the country that if the government did not show a becoming vigilance, *something would happen which would be almost as bad as famine and pestilence.*

"Now, what was the consequence of that declaration? The present government took an early opportunity, soon after I had made that declaration, to express a contrary opinion. They said there was in Ireland an absence of crime and outrage, with a general sense of comfort and satisfaction such as was unknown in the previous history of the country. Now, my lords, that was the issue placed before the country to decide. I warned the constituencies that there was going on in Ireland a conspiracy which aimed at the disunion of the two countries, and probably something more. I said that, if they were not careful, something might happen almost as bad as pestilence or famine. The country, on the other hand, was immediately told that there was in Ireland a general sense of comfort and satisfaction unprecedented in the history of that country. Now there was a complete issue to be decided, and the country decided that Ireland was in a state of comfort and satisfaction. My observations, of course, were treated with that ridicule which a successful election always secures. What has occurred in Ireland since then? What is the state of Ireland at the present moment? I do not want to indulge in exaggerated phrases, nor do I wish to use language that would adequately express the horrors which have occurred in that country. I think, however, I am not using exaggerated language when I say that in portions of Ireland the sovereignty of our queen has been absolutely superseded. I think I am not using exaggerated language when I say, that Her Majesty's executive in Ireland have absolutely abdicated their functions. I think I am not using exaggerated language when I say, that there have been months of murder and incendiarism and of every conceivable outrage. I think I am not using exaggerated language when I say that the judges of the land have been denounced and defied, and that the administration of justice has altogether ceased; and that the law—the queen's law—is no longer respected by the majority in that country.

"What has been the occasion of this? Why have not steps been taken in proper time to prevent what everyone feels might have been nipped in the bud? Why, it was

because of these declarations that Ireland was in a state of comfort and content, and because the person who made them, being the most responsible person in the land, or about to become so, felt it necessary to act in his political position in harmony with his polemical one. Now, my lords, what happened when the change of government took place? The first thing that was done was a very slight thing. We had established a royal commission to inquire into the state of agriculture, not only in England, but in Ireland. That commission had reached Ireland, and was very busy in its operations. I believe there never before was a royal commission formed with such anxiety on the part of the government that it should be an able, an adequate, and an impartial commission. Every shadow of opinion was represented, and the ablest men were invited to sit upon it. I speak with the greatest confidence on this subject, as I myself undertook the task of forming that commission. No sooner was the government changed, however, than a new royal commission was appointed to inquire into the state of agriculture in Ireland. What was the effect of that? Whatever the intention might have been, the effect was to make the country understand that the new government could place no confidence in the royal commission of the late administration.

"Well, Her Majesty's government being in office, the late lord-lieutenant of Ireland naturally thought the time had come when he ought to give them his opinion with regard to that country. There had been very great anxiety to know what would be the course of Her Majesty's government in regard to the continuance of the Peace Preservation Act. I think there was at that time, if not a formal declaration, at least a general understanding that probably the new government would not propose to continue that Act. But, however that may be, the lord-lieutenant impressed upon Her Majesty's ministers his opinion that *the Peace Preservation Act should certainly be continued.* Noble lords will perfectly recollect what occurred on that occasion. It has been said very frequently—I do not mean in this House, for that would give it great authority—but it has been said by what are called organs of opinion, which are in communication with political personages of influence, and which, therefore, speak with authority, that it was never the intention of the late government to continue the Peace Preservation Act. That is not true. It is fortunate that I can prove this in a manner which will be satisfactory to your lordships and to the country, for a noble lord asked me a question on the subject before the dissolution of parliament. In my reply to him, after deprecating the assumption of the noble lord that, as a matter of course, I should be prime minister in the new parliament, of which I had very great doubt, I used these words:—'But it is by no means imprudent to assume that the new parliament will do its duty to the country, and that it will repeat that Act, or, if necessary, support it with stronger measures if they are required in the circumstances of the times.'

"*My letter to the lord-lieutenant involved the continuance of the Peace Preservation Act.* It remains as a positive fact that the late government were pledged to it. In regard to what happened out of this House there can be no question. We had our own bill drawn, and I am permitted to say that the late chief secretary for Ireland [Mr. James Lowther], who unfortunately is no longer a member of parliament, offered that bill very courteously to his successor. His successor declined that offer, but he necessarily had the advantage of the official information upon which the late cabinet had determined to continue the Peace Preservation Act. That information consisted of confidential reports from seventy persons of the highest authority in this matter. All that he had, which alone ought to have convinced him that the time had arrived when that Act ought to be continued. However, Her Majesty's government took quite a different

view. They made up their minds, not only to give a good shake to the congress of Berlin, and to do everything they could to inform every being in Central Asia, and in every part of Asia, that they meant to cut and run from the scene of a splendid conquest, but, following the same plan of throwing a stigma on everything which their predecessors had proposed or executed, they determined that Ireland was to be considered as a country in a state of comfort and satisfaction, and they have from that moment been legislating and administering affairs for a country in a state of comfort and satisfaction.

"As time has advanced they have changed their course. Now, at the last moment, they are about to do so on a great scale, because, unless they do it on a great scale, it is useless. *Why, if they had only deigned to follow in the footsteps of their predecessors—if they had only partially done so—they would not have found themselves in their present difficulties.* Was the country really so devoid of incident that there was nothing to guide them as to the immediate future? Parliament was prorogued on September 7, and the only allusion in the Queen's Speech to the state of Ireland was an expression of satisfaction that the condition of the people had been improved by the harvest. Only a few days afterwards the murder of Lord Mountmorres occurred.* Your lordships know the condition of Ireland at the present time. Europe knows it, Asia knows it. It is no longer, unhappily, a mere English question. The honour, perhaps the existence of England, depends upon our rallying our forces, not only with regard to Ireland, but with regard to other scenes of disquietude and danger which have been created by what has occurred in Ireland.

"It may be said, If these are your views why do you not call upon parliament to express them? Well, I do not know anything which would be more justifiable than an amendment on the address expressing our deep regret that measures for maintaining peace and order, for guarding life and property, and, let me add, liberty, which, I think is equally in danger in Ireland, were not taken in time, and pointing out that if such measures had been taken in time an enormous number of terrible incidents might have been averted; that men would now have been alive who have been murdered; that houses would now have been in existence which have been burned; that cases of torture to man and beast would never have happened—for these things, as your lordships are aware, have mainly occurred within the past two months. But, my lords, there are occasions when even party considerations must be given up. There are occasions when it may not be wise, even for your lordships, to place yourselves, as it were, at the head of public opinion in indignant remonstrance at the action of the ministry. The great dangers and disasters which have been impending or have happened in this country during the past nine months have arisen from the abuse of party feeling; and for that reason alone, if there were no other, I would recommend your lordships to pause before taking any step which would weaken the movements of the administration at this moment. I conclude that the government have come to their determination in a *bonâ fide* spirit. I expect that their bills, when introduced, will be found adequate to the occasion, for I am convinced that only ridicule will result if they are not conceived in a comprehensive spirit. I conclude also that it is their intention to proceed with these bills *de die in diem*, in order that some hope, some courage, may be given to our loyal and long-suffering subjects in Ireland. When those bills have been passed we shall be ready to consider any other measures which Her Majesty's government may bring before parliament. But I think it utter mockery to discuss any questions connected with Ireland now,

* As Lord Mountmorres was returning to Ebor Hall (Sept. 25, 1880), from a meeting of magistrates at Clonbar, county Galway, a volley of rifle bullets was discharged at him, and he was found dead half a mile from his residence.

except the restoration of peace and order, the re-establishment of the sovereignty of the queen, and a policy that will announce to Europe that the spirit of England has not ceased, and that, great as are the dangers that now environ ministers, the parliament of England will be equal to the occasion."

The government were not slow in demanding additional powers from parliament to suppress the lawless state of things across St. George's Channel. A fortnight after the meeting of the Houses, Mr. W. E. Forster—who from the very first was the only member of the cabinet who really appreciated and understood the terrible condition of affairs in Ireland—introduced the Protection to Person and Property Bill. In spite of the most frantic and disorderly efforts—efforts which lowered the popular chamber in the eyes of Europe—of the obstructionists to wreck the bill, it successfully passed the Commons, and was sent up for the criticism of the Peers. By this measure the lord-lieutenant of Ireland was empowered to issue a warrant for the arrest of any person suspected as being guilty of high treason, treason-felony, or treasonable practices; such person was to be detained as one accused of crime, but not as a convicted prisoner. At the same time an Arms Bill was introduced by Sir William Harcourt.

The bill, though he considered it a tardy measure, received the full support of Lord Beaconsfield. He sketched the causes which had led to the disaffection in Ireland; he condemned the conduct of the professional agitator and the interference of the American Fenian; and he regretted the course which the obstructionists had adopted to hamper the progress of the bill through the House of Commons.

"I rise to support," he said (March 1, 1881), "the second reading of the bill which the noble earl [Lord Spencer] has just moved; but I do it with reluctance. I support the bill because I think it is necessary—absolutely necessary—in the circumstances in which we find ourselves. But I confess that I cannot divest myself of some sense of shame that in the nineteenth century, in the very heart of our empire, in the United Kingdom itself, such scenes and circumstances should exist as justify—and not only justify and sanction, but render absolutely necessary—the measure which has been brought before your lordships' attention. My lords, this periodical disquietude in Ireland has been accounted for at various times by various causes. When I first entered public life, nearly half-a-century ago, there was then in Ireland great disquietude. We were then taught by great authorities that the cause of that disquietude was political, and that the only remedy for it would be to extend to a portion of the community in Ireland those civil privileges which were enjoyed by only a part of the population. But the political disquietude of Ireland reappeared in a few years, and we were then told that the cause was not political, but ecclesiastical, and all philosophers and politicians applied their minds to the consideration of remedies. They commenced by abolishing tithes; they ended by abolishing the church, which those tithes were intended to support. We are now told that the cause is very different—that it is agrarian or territorial; and generally speaking we are led to believe that the remedy is in fact to transfer the property of one class to another. Now, my lords, I should be very sorry, after such experience, and the failure of even the wisest and most experienced statesmen, to attempt to discover the sole cause of this state of affairs in Ireland. I would not for a moment pretend dogmatically to lay down my opinion as to the cause; but I think it will not be presumption in me if I attempt on this occasion to indicate what I think are the immediate causes which have produced disquietude, discontent, and outrage in Ireland.

"I think there are three causes to which the present state of affairs is to be attributed. In the first place, there has been

great suffering in Ireland from a series of bad harvests. But Ireland has been visited before by famine, and yet it did not result in such a condition of outrage and lawlessness as exists at the present moment. At a former period England contributed to the relief of distress in Ireland with a readiness which cannot be too highly appreciated, and the good nature of the Irish people themselves combined for the purpose of alleviating the distress. As far as the present instance of distress is concerned, when that distress began to pinch the people I do not observe that there was organized disaffection. The Irish people know very well that sterile harvests were not peculiar to Ireland during the last few years, and that they extended to all European countries and even beyond the limits of Europe; and England, which was the one country which sympathized the most with Ireland, was perhaps the one which suffered the most from that calamity. Then how is it that the present unfortunate state of things has been brought about in Ireland, when on former occasions it has been avoided? This brings me to the second point which I wish to advert to. It is most unfortunate that after a period of agricultural distress which has rarely been equalled—and probably its continuity has never been equalled—it is most unfortunate, I say, that at such a time the United Kingdom should have become the scene of a great party struggle, which has not been equalled for many years in the fierceness of the passions which it elicited. Those who appealed at such a time to the country felt that they were in a position of great advantage in appealing to the passions of a population that was suffering like the Irish. The most violent orations were addressed to the Irish people, and in point of fact it was impressed upon them by very accomplished orators and by trained and skilled agitators, that the sterile harvests under which they suffered were in some degree connected with the existence of the late government. And they further sought to impress upon them that the opponents of the late government were the only men who could bring forward measures equal to the occasion, and rescue them from the full consequences of those bad harvests. This style of oratory unfortunately brought about that which spreads like wildfire in Ireland—namely, an agitation of great fire and fierceness; and the most preposterous opinions were set afloat.

"Even in such circumstances I myself should not have despaired of the good sense of the country ultimately steering us through all these difficulties and dangers; but, unfortunately, the moment there springs up in Ireland any considerable agitation, the Irish people come under the influence of an organized conspiracy of foreigners, living in a foreign country, who immediately obtain the control of the circumstances of the country, and who no doubt recently placed society in the United Kingdom in considerable peril. We have had it declared recently in another place that there is very great exaggeration in the statements which have been made with regard to the state of things in Ireland, and that there is no foundation whatever for the assertion that there is a body having considerable power and resources in a foreign country that acts upon Ireland.* I believe, however, that Her Majesty's ministers are perfectly aware of the truth of that assertion, and that they have wisely acted in asking parliament for the powers which the bill will confer upon them. Those who have served Her Majesty in troublous times in Ireland—especially of late years—know the truth of that assertion, and of the existence of a state of things which makes it absolutely necessary that Her Majesty's government should possess the powers asked for, to defend Her Majesty, not from her rebellious subjects, but from foreign conspirators who are constantly

* So said the Home Rulers in the House of Commons; recent events, however, proved the value to be attached to this denial.

passing to and fro between another continent and these islands, and whose efforts are unceasing, and whose resources are vast.

"There are three causes which, in my opinion, have brought about the present state of affairs in Ireland, anything more distressing than which it is impossible to conceive. The moment the people of Ireland are suffering they have remedies announced to them which amount, in fact, to the acquisition of the property of their neighbours, and they are bid to seize that property at once. The country is no longer safe when doctrines of that kind are taught, and when no man is allowed to protect his property by lawful process without peril to his life. It is when the greed for the acquisition of property attains its present dimensions in Ireland that the foreigner appears and preaches the doctrine of assassination, of confiscation, and of the explosive patriotism of dynamite. If that be the state of things in Ireland at the present moment, I cannot doubt the propriety of the course which Her Majesty's government are now pursuing, and the wisdom of the measure which they have introduced to our notice. I can only regret that so long a time elapsed before Her Majesty's government proposed a measure of this character to parliament, and that such a long time has been wasted in another place in passing it before it reached your Lordships' House. I am confident that your lordships in supporting this bill are supporting a measure which will command the sympathy of all loyal subjects of Her Majesty. I believe in its efficacy, and I hope that its provisions will be tempered by moderation and by mercy. I hope, however, that the powers it confers will not be too hastily withdrawn. I am in hopes that, with the material condition of Ireland improved by Providence, which I think we have a right to count upon, with a continuance of the good harvests which have already commenced, the country will return to that condition of common sense which is absolutely necessary for good government, and that when that position is attained we may find the country flourishing and contented without being coerced."

The bill encountered no opposition in its passage through the House of Lords, and towards the end of March received the royal assent.

Second only to the suppression of crime and turbulence in Ireland was the question of the retention of Candahar. Upon this subject Lord Beaconsfield felt strongly. He disapproved, considering the loss of life and terrible expense which the late Afghan war had entailed upon England and upon the resources of the empire, of any of the positions which we had gained in Afghanistan being abandoned. Between India and the advance of Russia there stood only the disturbed regions of Afghanistan, to bar the progress of the Muscovite southwards in Central Asia. A firm and united kingdom, friendly to English interests, might be an effectual obstacle to Russian aggression; but Lord Beaconsfield rightly held, after the experience of the past, that Afghanistan could never be a strong and independent power, and that we could ill afford to place much confidence in its amity. The history of Afghanistan was the history of anarchy and civil war, and to create and maintain a united Afghanistan was, he feared, though he had once thought otherwise, impossible. A country inhabited by a brave yet turbulent people, ever being agitated by intestine feuds and jealousies, and possessing no fixed policy of its own, must inevitably fall under the influence of one of its powerful neighbours. The Afghan question therefore resolved itself into this, Was Afghanistan to be permitted to become the prey of Russian intrigues and designs, or was the district to be so guarded and controlled as to prevent the Afghans, even if they desired it, from becoming dangerous to English interests, and to the welfare of wealthy territories south of the Himalayas?

The Liberals were of opinion that we had no cause to be anxious at the advances of

Russia in Central Asia, that Afghanistan left to itself was a most effectual barrier against Muscovite designs upon India, should they ever be entertained, and that to hold the positions we had gained in Afghanistan, under the brilliant generalship of Sir Frederick Roberts, would entail upon us a vast and unnecessary expenditure. Lord Beaconsfield, and with him the majority of the Conservative party, held the opposite view. He was opposed to any desertion of the strongholds we had obtained in Afghanistan; but if the country was to be deserted by British soldiery, Candahar at all hazards, he asserted, must be retained. When it therefore became known that Mr. Gladstone had resolved upon abandoning Candahar, deep was the indignation of the more thoughtful among the patriotic party throughout the country. The desertion furnished the subject for an eloquent debate in the House of Lords. Lord Lytton, in a maiden speech which fully deserved the high praise passed upon it, brought forward a resolution "That nothing in the information laid before the House justifies the announced policy of Her Majesty's government in regard to Candahar." The chief opponents of the resolution were Lord Northbrook, Lord Derby, and the Duke of Argyll. On the Conservative side perhaps the ablest speech was that delivered by Lord Cranbrook. Clear, logical, and based upon facts which were never disputed, its arguments and conclusions appeared unanswerable. In the debate Lord Beaconsfield took part, and his speech—the last speech he ever delivered—was among the most effective that the discussion called forth. We now know that when the leader of the Opposition felt himself compelled on this occasion to place his views before the country, he was suffering such acute pain that he had to assuage the agony he endured by swallowing drugs.*

"The question really before your lordships," said Lord Beaconsfield (March 4, 1881), coming directly to the point, "is whether it is or is not wise to evacuate Candahar, and I shall endeavour to confine my observations strictly to that subject, or at least with one exception of a very slight character. I see no use in reviewing again the history of the Afghan war or of the proceedings which preceded it. Your lordships, having been appealed to on that subject, have given your opinion in great numbers, and after long and deep discussion. It would therefore, in my opinion, be unnecessary for me now to enter upon a consideration of that matter in detail. There are one or two salient facts to guide us in coming to a conclusion on this matter, and which it occurs to me to allude to at this moment, owing to the tone which the debate has taken. It is on record that the Ameer of Afghanistan appealed for succour some years ago to the viceroy of the queen in India, who is now first lord of the admiralty [Lord Northbrook], and the viceroy thought it his duty to reject the overtures made to him. It also stands upon record that this rejection was the origin of all the misunderstandings and misfortunes which have since occurred. It also stands upon record that about three years afterwards, panic-stricken, I suppose, by the rumour that the Russians were approaching Merv, the then viceroy decided on the plan which, in his opinion, should be then adopted to meet the difficulties and dangers of such a proceeding; and he proposed an offensive and defensive treaty in Afghanistan, and the establishment of a resident minister on the

* "My lords, the last time at which Lord Beaconsfield spoke in this House a speech of an argumentative character was a few weeks ago. I think it was at about twelve o'clock on the second night of the debate on the Afghan question, Lord Beaconsfield sent me a message saying that he purposed speaking directly. I sent him a strong remonstrance, saying that two peers who had been in office, and a third peer, one of the most remarkable speakers in the House, desired to take part in the debate. But Lord Beaconsfield persisted, and I thought I was justified in making a rather strong complaint of his having done so. I have since learned with regret that Lord Beaconsfield, just before he received the message, had swallowed one drug, and had inhaled another drug in quantities so nicely adapted as to enable him to speak free from the depression of his complaint during the time that that speech required for delivery."—*Lord Granville, House of Lords, May* 9, 1881.

British side of Herat. These are great salient truths, and I must say that I am quite surprised, remembering these historical facts, at the tone which the noble lord, the first lord of the admiralty, took with reference to my noble friend the late viceroy of India. One would suppose that the noble earl was not only a pupil of the peace at any price school, but that he was also graduating for higher honours in the more refined school which would wage war and at the same time negotiate, more especially if our arms had been defeated. I was very much disappointed, my lords, at the reply the noble duke the lord privy seal [the Duke of Argyll] made to my noble friend [Lord Cranbrook] near me. I had listened, as a very full House had listened, with pleasure to that speech, and a speech more exhaustive, more animated, more completely touching every point of the subject I have rarely heard. Well, I knew that my noble friend was to be followed by one whose ability was equal to any emergency—one who is an ornament of this House, and invariably delights the audience which he addresses. Well, my lords, what did we hear? Was there any answer to the speech of my noble friend? On the contrary, we had a series of biographies of Indian worthies, and when the list closed it was, as usual, flung at the head of my noble friend the late viceroy. Under these circumstances I think we have had enough of recurrence to the past, and that we may confine our consideration to the point before us.

"My lords, there is one point only, before I touch upon the question of Candahar, on which I would like to make one or two remarks; and that is about our relations with Russia, which have formed so important a portion of our discussion to-night as on previous occasions. Now, my lords, when my noble friend and myself were commissioned to proceed as plenipotentiaries to Berlin, nearly three years ago, our instructions were to achieve, if possible, two great objects—one, of course, to secure and guard the interests of our own country, and the other to combine with the other powers, if possible, for some general arrangement or some unity of feeling which might secure, if not the perpetual, at least the lasting peace of Europe. Well, my lords, when we came to consider our interests in this subject, it was quite obvious that it was quite impossible to arrive at any arrangement which would give a fair probability of a lasting European peace if there was not sympathy on the part of Russia; and the time seemed to have arrived, when a congress was called upon to settle the affairs of Europe, to make some efforts to come, if possible, to some direct understanding with Russia which might tend to the beneficial results we had in view.

"I must say that before we could take any steps we were anticipated by the illustrious chancellor of that empire, who expressed a desire on the part of Russia that some attempt should be made to put an end to that chronic misunderstanding which seemed always to be recurring between the two countries of Great Britain and Russia. I do not, my lords, mean to say that there was at any time an intention of an alliance, or a treaty, or a convention, but what we all seemed to desire was that, if possible, instead of hostile distrust, there should be, at least, some approximation to confidence; and that when any occurrence of a controversial character took place in those parts of the world where the interests of Russia and England clashed, there should be, at least, a friendly and candid communication of views between the two powers which might remove causes which were not at all adequate reasons for misunderstanding. Well, my lords, when we returned to England, I think I expressed the sentiments which my noble colleague would have expressed on this matter. I took the earliest opportunity of declaring in this House that those circumstances which had occurred in Central Asia with reference to efforts of Russia, the avowed object of which was to embarrass and disturb English interests in that part of the world—I say I took the

earliest opportunity of announcing in this House that, so far as those preparations had been made by Russia with the belief that war was immediately pending between the two countries, we found that we had no cause to complain, and that we were willing to forget, and wished to forget, all that had occurred in that respect. And in consequence a formal communication of our views, which I do not doubt will be found in the annals of the foreign office, was made on the subject, and we received, as I stated at the time, an answer from St. Petersburg of the most satisfactory kind—in fact, expressing all those views and sentiments which Prince Gortschakoff, the chancellor of the empire, had expressed at the congress.

"Your lordships are aware," continued Lord Beaconsfield, alluding to the correspondence between Shere Ali and General Kaufman found in the autumn of 1879 at Cabul, and which disclosed the existence of a secret treaty between the Ameer and Russia, hostile to England, and signed *after* the conclusion of the treaty of Berlin; "Your lordships are aware that within a short time there has been laid upon your table a correspondence, which has been described as a sinister correspondence, and which has for so long a time been the subject of interest, I would say of suppressed interest, in many political circles. Your lordships may remark that at the end of that correspondence the present Russian ambassador alludes in a summary to a despatch of Count Schouvaloff, in which there is a long quotation or summary of what I had expressed to Count Schouvaloff in a conversation. I am sure, my lords, that nobody who took up those papers would believe that it was a publication which had been for a long time suppressed even at Cabul, with an account of the Russian ambassador's interview with me, entirely condoning the past and approving everything that Russia had done. They could see no reason for the publication of that despatch. But, my lords, if you look at the date of the despatch you will find that it was in November, 1878, whereas the despatches between the Russian authorities and the Ameer which were discovered after the second capture of Cabul were not obtained by the British government until exactly a year afterwards—namely, October or November, 1879. And therefore it does appear to me most extraordinary that while the despatch of Count Schouvaloff giving an account of his interview with me, condoning the conduct of the Russian government under certain conditions and circumstances which are almost *verbatim* what I did express in this House about a month before—that anyone could think there was any connection between those despatches so found a year afterwards at Cabul and that conversation.

"Your lordships may also remark that in this curious publication there is in inverted commas what purports to be an announcement on my part, that in my opinion the government of India had forced our hands upon the subject of war, and had occasioned a declaration of war not only before it was necessary, but when it was, perhaps, altogether unnecessary. The case was exactly the opposite of that. Instead of Her Majesty's government complaining of being forced by the government of India to make war, that government was most anxious to avoid war. We were appealed to by the government of India to know what was our decision, as it fell upon them to make preparations for war, if war were decided upon; and when the affair came so near that the government of India asked for its final instructions, it pledged itself voluntarily to make no single military operation without our sanction and advice. The English government, as appears by the papers, were anxious to give Shere Ali a *locus penitentiæ*, and instructed the government of India to concede to him a period of three weeks to consider what he would do. We calculated every day, and considered the full time that would not interfere with military operations if they became

necessary. My lords, I am quite certain that Count Schouvaloff was utterly incapable of misrepresentation as to anything I expressed to him. He was well known to every member of this House, a great ornament of society, a most honourable man, and I supposed at the time that it must have been a misapprehension of the ambassador. But I understand it referred, not to our hand being forced by the government of India to go to war—that was absolutely absurd—but to the mission which two months before had been sent by the Indian government, with the sanction of the English government. Your lordships are well aware of the failure of that expedition; but the expedition was not an operation of war, but a mission of peace; and we sent an individual who was the friend of Shere Ali, and who we believed would have succeeded in accomplishing a great object. It was absolutely necessary that I should call your lordships' attention to the fact that the alleged conversation with Count Schouvaloff appended to the papers discovered at Cabul took place in fact one year before they were discovered, and consequently that the expressions which excited my pain and surprise really referred to other subjects. I propose now to notice a remark as to why, when these papers were discovered at Cabul, they were not published by the late government.

"Certainly it would not have been in harmony with the existence of good feeling between the English plenipotentiaries and Prince Gortschakoff, if we took at the earliest opportunity a step which would not have tended to the cultivation of that friendly feeling between the two countries which was our object. Then we are asked why we consented to that publication. I am not the person who has consented to the publication, but the minister. I always took it for granted, from the extraordinary proceedings with regard to Afghanistan during the general election, that sooner or later there must have been a discussion on the subject. It was when in the frenzy of the hustings the country was enlightened on the subject of the war in Afghanistan, and when it was denounced by the late ministry as unnecessary and a great damage to the country—it was not until these expressions were used that we found that some steps should be taken on our part also to enlighten the country. Who could have supposed that our successors, with the Cabul papers, not published, but in their possession to guide them, should have announced in the manner they did that the whole of our policy in Afghanistan should be repudiated? Our whole policy in Afghanistan is described as a monstrous romance, as if there had been no occasion for a single incident that occurred. Our recollection of the previous connection of the first lord of the Admiralty with the Ameer seemed to be entirely effaced from the memory of the nation. And therefore when my noble friend, the late viceroy, found himself held up in so distorted a form to this country, it is not surprising that as a member of this House he should have taken an opportunity of calling your lordships' attention to the subject of these despatches.

"Now, I would ask the lord privy seal why he did not answer the two most important questions in this debate?—they were asked by the noble viscount behind him. The first is, What do the government mean to do with Candahar when they evacuate it in a month hence? The next question is, Why we are not favoured with the opinion of Lord Ripon and his councillors? These are two questions which we have certainly a right to have answered. My noble friend [Lord Derby], who made a very animated speech—and I do not know there is anything that would excite enthusiasm in him except when he contemplates the surrender of some national possession—made a distinct point on that subject. He asked why we made such a great point of retaining Candahar at present, when we were willing when we made the treaty of Gandamuk to restore it to the native prince. The answer

is clear. *When we negotiated the treaty of Gandamuk our policy was to create a powerful and independent Afghanistan, and therefore everybody must feel that an attempt to retain Candahar must baffle and defeat that policy.*

"My lords, you have an old policy with regard to the relations of this country, India, and Afghanistan, which has been approved by all public men. Lord Lawrence, whom we always speak of with great respect—though the lord privy seal says we systematically insulted him—was most decided in his policy that there should be an English interest in Afghanistan, and that Russian influence in it should not for a moment be tolerated. Well, what is your policy now? Where will English interests be when you have evacuated Afghanistan? What will be the state of Afghanistan? It will be a state of anarchy. We have always announced, as a reason for interfering in Afghanistan, that we cannot tolerate a state of anarchy on our frontiers. Is not that an argument as good for Russia as for us? Will not the Russians say, 'Afghanistan is in a state of anarchy, and we cannot go on civilizing Turkestan when Afghanistan is in a state of anarchy?' Therefore you are furnishing Russia with an occasion for advancing. When I speak of this policy of Russia I do not speak of it in a hostile spirit. Russia has a right to its policy as well as England. Russia has as good a right to create an empire in Tartary as we have in India. She must take the consequences if the creation of her empire endangers our power. I see nothing in that feeling on the part of England which should occasion any want of friendliness between this country and Russia. We must guard against what must be looked upon as the inevitable designs of a very great power. When Lord Palmerston carried one of the greatest measures of his life—the fortification of the channel, which was of much more importance than the retaining of Candahar—was that looked upon as a symbol of hostility to the French people? Everyone knows that Lord Palmerston was very friendly to the French alliance, and yet that was an operation directed immediately against France for the purpose of putting an end to the continual fluctuations of bluster and fear which such a situation as England was in at that time must necessarily entail.

"I come now to the question of finance. I will not discuss whether Sir Henry Norman's helter-skelter estimates [under Lord Lytton Sir Henry was president of the council of India] or those of other persons are the best or worst; but I will remind your lordships of this, that everything that has been alleged respecting the retention of Candahar and the consequent expense was said about the retention of the Punjaub. We heard when the retention of the Punjaub was proposed that it was impossible to raise any respectable revenue there; that the country was bare; that the population, compared with India, was sparse; and that it was quite impossible that the expenditure of our government could be repaid. All these arguments were urged against annexation of any kind. But eventually you found a very prosperous country in the Punjaub and Scinde, which proved a source of wealth and strength to India. I will not believe without much better proof that the retaining Candahar—the capital of an extremely fertile district—will entail upon you a result less satisfactory than the result of the retention of the Punjaub and Scinde. The *primâ facie* evidence is, I think, in favour of a rich district paying its expenses, and, in time, probably paying more than its expenses.

"There is another point connected with Candahar of which much has been made in this debate and on other occasions. It is said that we are debarred from annexing or retaining Candahar by our public declarations and agreements, and in the front of these is always placed the celebrated proclamation of the queen when she accepted the sovereignty of India. I can speak with some confidence upon that

subject, for, to a certain extent, I am responsible for that proclamation. It never entered into my head that there was anything in that proclamation which should prevent the queen, if she went to war with a foreign power, making such terms at the conclusion of peace as she might think fit, and availing herself of her power to take any provinces by right of conquest. The proclamation is essentially a domestic proclamation addressed to the princes of India, and the obligation of that proclamation has been most rigidly observed. There is no instance in which Her Majesty has been counselled to deviate from it, and I must repudiate the attempt to treat the queen's proclamation on her assumption of the full sovereignty of India as a bar to the retention of Candahar if the government should deem that retention wise and prudent. As to the observation that the commanding officers announced to the people that they were making war against princes only and not upon subjects, it may be easily disposed of. Such an announcement is an Oriental custom. In all the wars that have taken place of late — certainly in some of them — similar assurances have been given by the invading power; but it has not prevented rich countries losing their capitals, and ancient empires being dislocated. In fact, you can generally drive a coach and six through declarations of that kind.

"I have now touched upon the principal points in this question of the retention of Candahar. I confess that I have not heard an answer to the speeches of my noble friend who introduced this subject to your notice, of the noble marquis [Lord Salisbury], and of the noble viscount [Lord Cranbrook] who addressed your lordships first this evening. It will not be unreasonable if I repeat a few points on which we lay particular stress. We want to know why we are not favoured with the views of Lord Ripon and his council, and what scheme the government have in view if they evacuate Candahar in the short space of time announced—namely, in less than a month. Noble lords opposite cheered the noble lord [Lord Dunraven] who addressed us from those benches with so much power, and who seemed to admit that he would be satisfied if Candahar were to be retained for a certain period of time. Well, there is nothing unusual in retaining possession of a considerable town or province until the country, after great disquietude, war, and revolution, has subsided into comparative tranquillity. That is not an Oriental practice. It has been practised in some countries in Europe. There have been such things as military occupations before the present time. If the government had come forward and announced that they intended to give up almost everything that we had obtained, but that in the present state of Afghanistan they did not see their way to leave Candahar, though they did not think fit to appropriate it absolutely, I should still have regretted their not annexing Candahar, but I should have felt that they were making a reasonable and statesmanlike suggestion, which should be received with attention. Such a course would have received the respectful attention of this House. I think that it becomes the House of Lords to express its opinion upon this subject. I had myself believed that, if we abandoned Candahar, we should still be able to retain our Indian empire. I do not think that it is absolutely essential to us. There are several places which are called the keys of India. There is Merv. I do not know whether that place has yet been taken by the Russians. Perhaps the first lord of the Admiralty will be able to inform us."

The Earl of Northbrook: "It is not a seaport."

The Earl of Beaconsfield: "No, it is not a seaport. Still, there is Merv; then there is a place whose name I forget—there is Ghuzni; then there is Balkh, then Candahar. My opinion is, that though such places may not be essential to us, yet that I should regret to see any great military

power in possession of them — I should look upon such an event with regret, and perhaps with some degree of apprehension; but if the great military power were there, I trust we might still be able to maintain our empire. But, my lords, the key of India is not Herat or Candahar. *The key of India is London.* The majesty and sovereignty, the spirit and vigour of your parliament, the inexhaustible resources, the ingenuity and determination of your people —these are the keys of India. But, my lords, a wise statesman would be chary in drawing upon what I may call the arterial sources of his power. He would use selection, and would seek to sustain his empire by recourse to local resources only, which would meet his purpose. You have always observed that system in this country for the last hundred years. You have skilfully appropriated many strong places in the world. You have erected a range of fortifications; you have overcome countries by the valour of your soldiers and the efforts of your engineers. Well, my lords, I hope that we shall pursue the same policy. If we pursue the same policy, Candahar is eminently one of those places which would contribute to the maintenance of that empire. It is advisable to retain it on economical grounds, as it is now held by us; and, as my noble friend said in his speech, would it be a becoming course for us now to withdraw, when the fact that the power of England can be felt promptly and on the spot is the best security for peace, and the best security for peace must be the best defence in case of war?

"The views taken by my noble friend [Lord Derby] below the gangway are essentially erroneous views, and in no one point are they more erroneous, I think, than in what he said of the opportunity which the House of Lords now has of expressing its opinion. I do not wish in any way to maintain an exaggerated view. Feeling myself keenly upon the question of Candahar, I believe there is a real and a deep feeling, and what is more, an increasing feeling, on the subject. The subject is being more considered; opinion will become more matured. There cannot be, therefore, a more legitimate occasion for the Peers of England to come forward and to give to the country the results of their wisdom and their experience, as I hope they will to-night, in reference to the empire of India."

After a debate which occupied two nights, the motion of Lord Lytton was carried by a large majority—contents, 165; non-contents, 76: majority, 89.

All fears as to Russian activity in the East were now for the moment set at rest by the awful news which was flashed to London from St. Petersburg. During the last few years the huge, unwieldy empire ruled by the Czar had been handed over to the furies which so often attend upon a hard and uncompromising despotism. Revolutionary ideas, the counsels of secret societies, the dagger and the dynamite of the political conspirator, the fanaticism of turbulent youth, had been of late busy at work throughout the length and breadth of Russia, bidding the nation rise against their rulers, and shake off the iron hand which kept down their liberties as a people. And, as is so often the case when the name of liberty is invoked to resist oppression, crime and license gave their aid, and cast their lurid glare upon the scene. Between the earnest prayer for constitutional government, for relief from a bitter taxation, for escape from vindictive punishments, for toleration and political emancipation, and the wild shriek for communism with all its attendant claims, there is but a step, which men maddened by their sufferings and restrictions often take, to the destruction of themselves and the ruin of their cause.

It was so now with the advocates for reform in the dominions of the Czar. As long as the reformers limited their demands to constitutional government, with all the advantages consequent upon such a system, the sympathy of enlightened

Europe was with them; but when the diabolical aid of the Nihilist was called in, with his levelling creed and murderous weapons, sympathy was quickly exchanged for disgust and abhorrence. To the communist the throne is the first object which excites his keenest hate, and the Russian Nihilist, animated by the same views as the rest of his execrable fraternity, now vowed deadly enmity to the head of the house of Romanoff. With the Czar as chief of the realm the spread of republicanism, in the eyes of the Nihilist, was an impossibility. A few months before his cruel death the unhappy Alexander had been mercifully preserved from a plot which had for its object the reduction of his winter palace to ruins. The severest precautions had been then taken by the Russian authorities to guard the person of their sovereign from future danger. Escorts, police, spies, confidential advisers, were, however, in vain. One day, whilst the Czar was driving out, an infernal machine was thrown under the wheels of his carriage. The chariot was destroyed, but the sovereign for the moment was preserved; then a second bomb was flung, which severely mutilated the body of its victim, and after a few hours of semi-consciousness the autocrat of all the Russias had ceased to exist.

As an expression of the intense indignation felt by the nation at so detestable a deed, an address of condolence was drawn up by the Peers of England and delivered to the queen. A similar address was presented to the now fatherless Duchess of Edinburgh. The circumstance served Lord Beaconsfield as an occasion to make a few remarks—the last which were ever to fall from his lips in public.

"I am sure your lordships," he said (March 15, 1881), "will express with earnestness your respectful sympathy with Her Majesty the queen in the affliction which has fallen so unexpectedly upon her. The relations between the queen of this country and the Emperor Alexander II.—the most beneficent prince that ever filled the throne of Russia—were of a peculiar nature; they cannot rank among the ordinary ones which exist between sovereigns. Between Her Majesty and the emperor there existed ties of intimate and life-long friendship, strengthened by domestic relations, of great facility and satisfaction. This friendship, although it had to endure, by the ordinance of Providence, great trials, was one which, on more than one occasion, was exercised in a beneficent manner by both sovereigns for the welfare of the two countries. The horrible murder of a prince and an ally, of a connection so near and dear, must have been the cause of much agitation to Her Majesty. It has disturbed the feelings of all Europe—Europe which, as one nation, is alarmed and indignant. But of all countries of Europe I know none—not even Russia itself—that can have heard of this catastrophe with greater horror and greater sympathy than our own. The Emperor of Russia had one daughter, to whom he was passionately attached, and who returned to him an adoration quite equal to his own. That daughter is a princess of England. My lords, her woe must be very great. I know all your lordships will feel that in a case like this consolation is vain. But though solace may be impossible, sympathy will have a voice; and I cannot but believe that when it is now offered to our sovereign and her suffering child it will be appreciated, coming as it does from this illustrious and ancient house."*

His own end was now drawing nigh. Shortly after having delivered these few words of condolence upon the death of the Czar Alexander, the country heard with regret that Lord Beaconsfield was confined to his room by severe indisposition. His old complaint of gout, coupled with bronchial irritation, was again troubling him. At first it was hoped that the illness was only temporary, and would be speedily

* These few words Lord Beaconsfield amused himself by correcting during his illness for the pages of *Hansard*, saying that "he would not go down to posterity speaking bad grammar."

conquered by the means that were at once employed. Then it became apparent that the malady was graver than at the outset had been imagined; complications ensued which required no little vital energy successfully to resist, and every day the distinguished invalid was becoming weaker and weaker. After a fortnight's suffering it was no secret that, in that well-known house in Curzon Street, the battle between life and death was being keenly contested, and those who remembered the age Lord Beaconsfield had attained felt that there could be but one end to the struggle. Upon that issue the eyes of all Europe were turned. At every court, in every foreign capital, in every cabinet, the state of Lord Beaconsfield's health was the chief topic of discussion. Every newspaper on the Continent, friendly or inimical to the dying statesman, furnished its readers with the latest particulars contained in the frequently issued bulletins. In London the excitement and suspense were intense; crowds paced up and down Curzon Street eager to catch any passing whisper which might gratify curiosity; the evening journals were quickly scanned to read the last medical opinion; almost the only subject which sustained conversation was that which touched upon the condition of the great Tory chieftain slowly yet surely passing on to his rest. In the interest and anxiety of the moment all other matters were hushed and held in abeyance—politics afforded no interest, speculation no activity, art and literature no gratification; everything was absorbed in the one great topic commented upon in every newspaper, "the health of Lord Beaconsfield." Then the end came—an end for which the nation was prepared by the alarming character of the bulletins which had recently been issued. Lord Beaconsfield died in his house in Curzon Street, at half-past four o'clock, in the morning of April 19, 1881.

We know what followed; the genuine sorrow of the nation, the vast concourse of people which attended the funeral ceremony at Hughenden, and the graceful eulogies delivered in both Houses of Parliament. Never in the political history of our country has an English minister been called upon to obey the last summons who was more cherished by his sovereign, more regretted by those whom genius, birth, and wealth have made conspicuous, and more honoured and respected by a people at large, than he who identified Conservatism with the national policy, and spent his life in illustrating its principles and carrying out its aims.

On the occasion of the monument which was proposed to be erected to the memory of the Earl of Beaconsfield, the opponents of the late statesman vied with each other in giving expression to the loss sustained by the nation in the removal of so great a man. Friend and rival had but one end in view at that moment—to do full honour to him who had so often led his party on to unexpected victory, and so often had defeated the intrigues of an opposition. In the House of Lords, Lord Granville—though a political opponent a social friend of the deceased*—rose to move "That an humble address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that Her Majesty will give directions that a monument be erected in the collegiate church of St. Peter, Westminster, to the memory of the late Right Hon. the Earl of Beaconsfield, K.G., with an inscription expressive of the high sense entertained by the House of his rare and splendid gifts, and of his devoted labours in parliament and in great offices of state; and to assure Her Majesty that this House will concur in giving effect to Her Majesty's most gracious message."

The words with which this motion was supported were few but well chosen. It

* "Some time before the last illness he gathered round him one evening some friends, who may pardon the mention of their names, as a proof that he never permitted politics to interfere with friendships. The Duke and Duchess of Sutherland, Lord and Lady Granville, Lord and Lady Spencer, Lady Chesterfield, Lady Dudley, Lady Lonsdale, Lord and Lady Barrington, Lord and Lady Cadogan, Lord Bradford, Mr. Alfred de Rothschild, Sir Frederick Leighton, and Mr. Henry Manners dined with him."—*Lady John Manners.*

was not the moment, nor was he the man, said Lord Granville (May 9, 1881), to give any biographical sketch of one so well known as Lord Beaconsfield, and still less would it become him, a political opponent, to analyse in any degree the policy of the departed peer. Yet when great abilities had been devoted to the service of the state, they should be fully recognized and acknowledged. It was impossible for anybody to deny that Lord Beaconsfield had played a great part in English history. No one could deny his rare and splendid gifts and his force of character. No one could deny how long and how continuous his services had been, both with regard to the crown and parliament. Lord Beaconsfield had achieved, by his own strong individuality, without any adventitious circumstances, the great personal success to which he had attained. "My lords," said Lord Granville, "some men have obtained influence over others by possessing in a stronger degree the merits, qualities, and faults of those they lead; others have produced the same effect by exactly opposite causes. I believe Lord Beaconsfield, a man himself very free from prejudices, and more or less tolerant of them, belonged to the latter class. I have never known any man so complete a master, in writing and speaking and in conversation, of censure and of eulogy. His long habit of sparkling literary composition, his facility of dealing with epigram, with metaphor, with antithesis, and even with alliteration, gave him a singular power of coining and applying phrases which caught the popular mind, and which attached praise and blame to the actions of the great parties in the state. My lords, the noble earl undoubtedly possessed the power of appealing to the imagination, not only of his countrymen, but of foreigners, and that power is not destroyed by death. With certain exceptions, Lord Beaconsfield was singularly tolerant with regard to his political opponents, and singularly appreciative of their merits. I believe no more happy compliment was ever paid to Lord Palmerston and Earl Russell than by Mr. Disraeli in the House of Commons; and I have heard one of Mr. Cobden's dearest friends quote, as the most touching speech he ever heard, the tribute which Mr. Disraeli paid in the House of Commons to his great and victorious free-trade opponent. I myself can boast of having been treated in this House, by successive leaders of the great Conservative party, with great kindness and great fairness; but I am bound to say that by none was that fairness and forbearance more remarkably displayed than by Lord Beaconsfield during the few years I have had the honour of sitting opposite him. He has shown me great friendliness and fairness in regard to foreign affairs. Your lordships have heard how kind and good-natured a man Lord Beaconsfield was in private life. I believe that to be perfectly true, notwithstanding the singular power of destructiveness he sometimes possessed and exercised. I remember being told by one with whom constant devotion to Lord Beaconsfield during his life was one of the characteristic traits of his character, that not only was he a kind and good-natured man, but that he was also singularly sensitive of kindnesses shown to him by others. There is one reason why we should pay respect to the memory of Lord Beaconsfield in this House, not always of a disinterested character. The aristocracy of this country, sometimes in praise, sometimes in blame, has been described as proud, powerful, and wealthy, and the democratic element, combined with this aristocratic institution, has certainly added to its wealth, and to its strength, and possibly to its life; and I can conceive no brighter and no more brilliant example of the way in which the portals of this assembly smoothly roll back to admit eminent and distinguished men, and welcome them to the very first ranks in the assembly that they so entered, than the example of the late Lord Beaconsfield."

The motion was seconded by Lord Salis-

bury in an appreciative and moving speech. Not many words, he said, were needed to commend such a motion to the acceptance of parliament. Not many words were needed, because one of the most striking phenomena attending that brilliant and remarkable career had been the deep interest with which throughout his illness, and after his death, his fate was followed not only by his own friends and adherents, but by men of every class and every opinion in the country, and by men of the greatest influence and power in other countries also. Whatever else might be said of the deceased statesman, that at least could never be gainsaid—that while his memory would ever be associated with many a controverted issue, the historian must always add that when the fierce struggle was over, and the great career was closed, there was no doubt what the verdict of his countrymen was as to the services that had been rendered. Such unanimity of opinion with respect to one whose measures were necessarily much contested would suggest various explanations. That his friends and colleagues should mourn his loss and revere his memory was only too natural.

"I have not the same title to speak," continued Lord Salisbury, "that many of those beside me have, because my close political connection with him was comparatively recent; but it lasted through anxious and difficult times, when the character of men is plainly seen by those who work with them, and to me, as I believe to all others who have worked with him, his patience, his gentleness, his unswerving and unselfish loyalty to his colleagues and fellow-labourers, have made an impression which will never leave me so long as life endures. But these feelings could only affect a limited circle of his immediate adherents. The impression which his career and his character have made upon the vast mass of his countrymen must be sought elsewhere. To some extent — to a great extent, no doubt—it is due to the peculiar character of his genius, to its varied nature, to the wonderful combination of qualities which he displayed, and which rarely reside in the same brain. To some extent, also, it is no doubt that the circumstance to which the noble earl has gracefully and eloquently alluded—the social difficulties which opposed themselves to his early rise, and the splendid perseverance by which they were overcome, have impressed his countrymen who love to see exemplified that open career to all persons, whatever their initial difficulties may be, which is one of the characteristics of their institutions of which they are most proud. They saw in Lord Beaconsfield a proof that whatever difficulties may attend the beginning of a man's fame, whatever he may have to struggle against, if the genius and perseverance are there, the most splendid position and the widest influence are open to any subject of the queen. But, my lords, there was another cause. Lord Beaconsfield's feelings and principles with respect to the greatness of his country, more and more as life went on, made an impression on his countrymen. *Zeal for the greatness of England was the passion of his life.* Opinions might differ, and did differ deeply, as to the measures and the steps by which expression was given to that dominant feeling; but more and more as his life went on and drew near its close, as the heat and turmoil of controversy were left behind, as the gratification of every possible ambition negatived the suggestion of any inferior motive, and brought out into greater prominence the purity and the strength of this one intense feeling, the people of this country recognized the force with which this desire dominated his actions, and they repaid it by an affection and reverence which did not depend on and had no concern with opinions as to the particular policy pursued. This was his great title to their attachment, that above all things he wished to see England united, and powerful, and great. As to questions of interior policy, which divide classes, he had to consider them, to form his judgment upon them, and shape

his course accordingly; but it seems to me that he treated them always as of secondary interest, compared with this one great question—How the country to which he belonged might remain united and strong. The feeling which he showed was repaid to him abundantly, and it is because this conviction spread itself through all classes, both amongst those who were his friends and those who were his opponents, that this vote, which has been moved by the noble earl and which I have risen to second, is no expression of party or sectional feeling —it is no representation of any opinion on any controverted question, but is the homage and the recognition of an united people to the splendid genius and the magnificent service he rendered."

In the lower House the praise passed upon the deceased statesman was equally generous. The speech delivered by Mr. Gladstone on the occasion was, though guarded in its terms, yet manly, sympathetic, and in the best taste—a speech which Sir Stafford Northcote justly criticised as "nobly expressed, and still more nobly conceived." "Every one," Mr. Gladstone said, "will feel that this is not the occasion to attempt an historical portraiture of Lord Beaconsfield. Neither is it the occasion to attempt, especially upon this side of the House—but from no side of the House will I say—to attempt a political eulogy of Lord Beaconsfield. It will be mistaken. I will go a little further and will admit that the position of the House is in some respects and in part peculiar. I do not know that it has ever happened that a parliament in sharp antagonism to the policy of a particular minister has been called upon to accept a proposal of this kind with respect to that minister whose policy it had opposed; but at the same time, though there is no case exactly analogous to this, yet there are cases which make a material approximation to it in these respects. When Lord Russell proposed, in 1850, in a speech of great good taste, a monument to the memory of Sir Robert Peel, he very naturally looked back, not merely to the crisis of the anti-corn law movement which had brought them together, but to the long struggle of thirty years, and Lord Russell said, in very becoming language, 'I will not enter into the nature of the crisis with which his name is associated,' and again, 'This is not the time to consider particular occasions and particular measures.' But he also quoted an earlier case, in which it happened that Colonel Barré proposed a public monument to Lord Chatham, with whom he had been, no very long time before, in the sharpest political opposition. And though the features of this case are marked features, yet we are not without guidance in proceedings which have taken place before. This I will venture to say, that the present is an occasion in which we, who form the majority of this House, should be on our guard against giving way to our narrower political sympathies. It would be better that propositions of this kind were altogether abandoned and forgotten, than that they should degenerate into the occasion of issuing a manifesto of political alliances or of ordinary partizanship.

"If I am asked, in endeavouring to look without fear or favour upon this case, upon its merits and upon nothing else, and desiring to speak the truth without constraint and without exaggeration, why I venture to recommend this proposition to the House, why I think that the same reasons which have led the House to give in the cases of other prime ministers of this country a testimony such as I now invite to the memory of Lord Beaconsfield, I say, in my judgment, we have to look to two questions and to two questions only; and these are, whether the tribute which it is proposed to pay is proposed to be paid to one who, in the first place, has sustained a great historical part, and done great deeds written on the page of parliamentary and national history; and the other, whether these deeds have been done with the full authority of the constituted organs of the nation and of the nation itself. I think an impartial

regard to what has happened will satisfy the House, that upon neither of these points is there the smallest room, for doubt. It may seem to be a sharp mental transition for us to take when we pass from the balance of political opinion which now prevails in this House to the balance of opinion which subsisted here two, three, or four years ago; but it is right, it is just, it is necessary that we should recollect that what was done by the late ministry, what was done, above all, by Lord Beaconsfield as the official head and as the guiding spirit of the late ministry, was done under precisely the same constitutional title, and with exactly the same charter and authority as that under which we now claim to act. Therefore, I cast behind me for the moment the question what I approve or what I disapprove—what I rejoice in, or what I regret. We are here to act on the part of the nation, and to maintain that description of action which is suitable to and which is required by the nation's continuous life.

"The career of Lord Beaconsfield is, in many respects, the most remarkable in our parliamentary history. For my own part, I know but one that can fairly be compared to it in regard to the emotion of surprise, and when viewed as a whole, the emotion I might almost say of wonder, which it is calculated to excite; and that is the career, and especially the earlier career, of Mr. Pitt. Lord Beaconsfield's name is associated with great constitutional changes, at least with one great constitutional change, in regard to which it will ever be admitted, at least I never can scruple to admit, that its arrival was hastened by his personal act. I will not dwell upon that, but I will simply mention the close association of his name with that important change in the principles of the parliamentary franchise. It is also associated with great European transactions and great European arrangements. I put myself in the position, not necessarily of a friend or admirer, who looks with sympathy on the character of the action of Lord Beaconsfield; but I look at the magnitude of the part which he played on behalf of his country, and I say that one who was his political friend might fairly have said of him when he came back from Berlin—

'Aspice, ut insignis spoliis Marcellus opimis
Ingreditur victorque viros supereminet omnes.'*

"My duty is to look at these things in the magnitude of their national and historical character, and it is so looking at them that I have not a doubt that the man who for seven years sustained the office of prime minister, the man who for nearly thirty years led, either in one House or in both, a great party in this country, the man who so entwined himself in the interest of the general heart as was shown on the occasion of his illness, is a man in whom those features meet which justify me in calling upon the House for this vote. I have said that, in my opinion, the magnitude of the part which he played, and the authority with which he played it, are the only matters to which we can look. I would press this point especially, for it is one many of us might forget or only feebly or ineffectually remember, viz., that he acted with the same authority as that which we claim for ourselves. The same Constitution, the same popular liberties, the same franchises, the same principle of the prevalence of the majority, placed him first at this box and then at the House of Lords to give effect to the policy which he believed to be for the benefit of his country, and which has now placed other men in his position to give effect to what they, with equal sincerity, desire to recommend to parliament.

"I think that the somewhat perhaps dry portion of my duty, which I have now performed in directing the attention of the House to those two points which I deem to contain the whole estimate of the case, is now concluded; and, as I have said, I will not attempt to give anything like a historical portrait. It would not be fair or just, even

* Behold how adorned with triumphal spoils Marcellus stalks along, and shines victor above the heroes all.—*Virgil.*

if it were appropriate in point of time, that I, who have been separated from Lord Beaconsfield by longer and larger differences than perhaps ever separated any two persons brought into constant contact in the transaction of public business—it would not be fair to him, it would not be fair to his friends, to draw a picture which must be more faintly coloured, ay, and differently coloured if executed by my hand, than that which they could fairly claim; but yet, sir, I will allow myself some satisfaction in dwelling on matters on which I feel it is pleasurable to myself, and on which I also think it is useful for us all to dwell. There were certain great qualities of the deceased statesman that I think it right to dwell upon. His extraordinary intellectual powers are as well understood by others as by me, and they are not proper subjects for our present commendation; but there were other great qualities—qualities not merely intellectual in the sense of being dissociated from conduct, but qualities immediately connected with conduct—with regard to which I should say, were I a younger man, that I should like to stamp the recollection of them on myself for my own future guidance, and with regard to which I would confidently say to others who are younger than myself that I strongly recommend them for notice and imitation. They were qualities not only written in a marked manner on his career, but possessed by him in a degree undoubtedly extraordinary. I speak, for example, of such as these—his strength of will; his long-sighted persistency of purpose, reaching from his first entrance upon the avenue of life to its very close; his remarkable power of self-government; and last, but not least of all, his great parliamentary courage—a quality in which I, who have been associated in the course of my life with some scores of ministers, have, I think, never known but two whom I could pronounce his equal."

Mr. Gladstone, after alluding to the loyalty with which Lord Beaconsfield ever upheld the interests of the Jews, and to the devotion which was so marked a feature in the domestic life of the deceased statesman,* thus concluded:—

"There is one slight matter on which I desire to give myself the satisfaction of a brief reference to Lord Beaconsfield. The feeling I am about to express is not a novel feeling. It is one which for many long years, in the occasions of private life, has been made known to me by my friends. There is much error and misapprehension abroad as to the personal sentiments that prevail among men who are divided in politics. Their words must necessarily from time to time be sharp; their judgments may occasionally, may warrantably, may necessarily be severe; but the general idea of persons less informed than those within the parliamentary circle is that they are actuated towards one another by sentiments of intense antipathy and hatred. Now, I wish to take this occasion, with the permission of the House, if for a moment I may degenerate into egoism upon a subject much too high for it—I wish to record in this place and at this hour my conviction, that in all the judgments ever delivered by the late Lord Beaconsfield on myself he never was actuated by sentiments of personal antipathy. It is a pleasure to me to make that acknowledgment. It is not new, although it is one which hardly with propriety could be made on an earlier occasion, and I am sure the House will excuse me for having obtruded it now. I would again

* "It may not be inappropriate here to refer to a few words spoken by Mr. Disraeli at the banquet given to him, in 1867, by the Conservatives of Scotland, at Edinburgh. Mr. Baillie Cochrane, now Lord Lamington (the 'Buckhurst' of 'Coningsby'), in proposing the health of Mrs. Disraeli, said, that his friendship with that lady had lasted nearly half a century, and that he was sure Mr. Disraeli would admit how much of the success of his career was owing to the sympathy he always received from her. In returning thanks, Mr. Disraeli said that Mr. Baillie Cochrane certainly had every opportunity of studying the subject to which he had drawn attention.

While speaking, his manner, so happily adapted to the occasion and the hour, became gradually very earnest, and in an almost solemn tone he said, looking towards the gallery where Lady Beaconsfield sat—'I do owe to that lady all, I think, that I have ever accomplished, because she has supported me by her counsel, and consoled me by the sweetness of her mind and disposition.'"—*Lady John Manners.*

call the attention of the House to the fact that what we have here to look at is the greatness of the man, the greatness of the offices he sustained, the greatness of the part he played, the greatness of the transactions associated with his name, and finally, the full and undisputed and constitutional authority which he possessed for those actions, whether they were gratifying to our sense or taste or not—the full, plenary, constitutional authority which he possessed to authorize beforehand and to sanction afterwards—these are the essential considerations which ought to guide us; and I feel convinced, unless it be my own grievous fault, and if so I can but regret it, that I have said enough to show this committee that they will do well and wisely to accept in a kindly spirit the motion I have now the honour to submit on behalf of a public monument to Lord Beaconsfield."

In the House of Lords the motion was carried without a dissentient voice. Unfortunately such unanimity did not prevail in the Commons. A Radical minority opposed the erection of a national memorial in Westminster Abbey to Lord Beaconsfield; and it pleased Mr. Labouchere to pursue the ungenerous course adopted under similar circumstances by Mr. Fox, who, when Mr. Lascelles had risen to move that a public memorial should be erected to the memory of William Pitt, strongly opposed the honour proposed to be conferred on his late rival—a proceeding which history has branded as "not magnanimous." In like manner Mr. Labouchere objected to the Beaconsfield memorial. He admired, he said, the perseverance and energy which had enabled Lord Beaconsfield to attain the highest position in the state; they admired the tact and urbanity which had characterized him as leader of a great party; and they even shared in the regret of his adherents for the loss of one so remarkable. When, however, they were asked to vote a national memorial to the late earl, they were obliged to determine whether a monument was merited, not by the personal qualities of the man, but by the policy of the minister. He was surprised to hear the premier say that, in proposing such a resolution, he was acting in accordance with precedent. During the last 125 years there had been a vast number of prime ministers, but only five had received recognition of that sort from the country.* Mr. Labouchere reminded the House that it was not a question as to whether Lord Beaconsfield should have a monument in Westminster Abbey, but whether it should be a national or a voluntary one. He concluded by asking Liberals not to stultify themselves by voting for the resolution, considering the opinions they had expressed, both in the country and in the House, with regard to Lord Beaconsfield's policy.

Mr. Labouchere was, however, no more successful than Mr. Fox. A majority of 169 voted in favour of a monument to William Pitt, and a majority of 326 voted in favour of a monument to Lord Beaconsfield. "The few detractors," comments Lord Macaulay, in passing judgment upon the employment of somewhat similar tactics on the occasion of the erection of a national memorial to the great Earl of Chatham, "who ventured to murmur, were silenced by the indignant clamours of a nation who remembered only the lofty genius, the unsullied probity, the undisputed services of him who was no more."

Mourned by his friends, regretted by the nation, his memory held in special honour by the legislature, there remained only one tribute to be paid to the teaching and career of the departed statesman, and it was gracefully rendered by Her who, in this country, is the fountain of all distinction. Between the crown and its late adviser-in-chief, relations existed, which it has seldom been the good fortune of any minister to inspire. On the side of the sovereign there was the fullest confidence in the control and discretion exercised by Lord Beaconsfield; whilst on the side of

* Chatham, William Pitt, Canning, Peel, and Palmerston.

the statesman zeal for the welfare of his country was so inseparably connected with a rigid maintenance of the prerogative, that it seemed to him impossible for the one to exist without the other. To Lord Beaconsfield the power of England, the purity of religion, the dispensation of justice, the security of commerce, and the preservation of the lower classes from the counsels of the agitator, were all dependent upon a jealous upholding of the rights of the crown, and were instantly put in jeopardy if the lawful authority wielded by the sovereign was once lessened. Under his administration Lord Beaconsfield was therefore ever the advocate of the prerogative as against undue encroachments of the House of Commons, and the influence formerly exercised by an interested oligarchy. He did not re-create or extend the power of the prerogative, he but maintained it; and the sovereign was grateful to her loyal and exacting servant. In his life-time the Earl of Beaconsfield had been honoured by attentions and marks of approval seldom conferred by the throne upon advisers however active and devoted. Nor were his services to be forgotten, now that he had passed out from the intrigues of courts and the strifes of cabinets.

Against the walls of Hughenden Church, immediately above the seat habitually occupied by the late Tory chief, there stands a monument, especially ordered by her Majesty to be erected for the perpetuation of the memory of her trusted chancellor. Beneath the profile portrait of Lord Beaconsfield, which occupies the centre of the memorial, is a tablet bearing the following dedication, penned by the Queen herself:—

TO
THE DEAR AND HONOURED MEMORY OF
BENJAMIN, EARL OF BEACONSFIELD,
THIS MEMORIAL IS PLACED BY HIS
GRATEFUL AND AFFECTIONATE
SOVEREIGN AND FRIEND,
VICTORIA, R.I.

"Kings love him that speaketh right."—PROVERBS, xvi. 13.
February 27, 1882.

Never has history had occasion to preserve a more touching record of that friendship which can so rarely exist between sovereign and subject.

The counsels and actions of Lord Beaconsfield stand too close to contemporary history to be regarded in their true light, but posterity will at least endorse this verdict, that they were never proffered and performed except that good might ensue to the country. The sole object which Lord Beaconsfield set before him throughout his long political career, was that what he advised and carried out should be instrumental in promoting the welfare of England. No minister was ever more single-minded in the pursuit of this aim. If Lord Beaconsfield deemed a measure adverse to English interests he strenuously opposed it; but if the voice of the country was in its favour, though he did not withdraw the opinions he entertained upon the subject, he never entered into factious opposition to thwart the measure, but, on the contrary, often exercised the authority he possessed to facilitate its progress through parliament. He was eminently—and the fact was frankly admitted by his enemies—a fair opponent. An opposition which could never be effectual he did not sanction; when he saw he could only hamper, but not defeat a measure, he unselfishly abandoned the contest. He struck the key-note of his opposition policy in his remarks upon the Burials Bill. "I support the bill," he said, "with great regret, and only because, from what I have observed in this House, I am convinced that opposition would be fruitless, *and fruitless opposition is a kind of opposition which I never care much to encourage.*" When men come to reflect upon the career of Lord Beaconsfield, and study the speeches and analyse the motives of the great Tory statesman, they will find that he owed the authority he exercised as much to his magnanimity when in Opposition as to his tact and prescience when in power.

It has been said that Lord Beaconsfield

was an adventurer. Political history has brought before us men who, from humble surroundings, have attained to posts of dazzling splendour, who have pillaged freely for themselves from the possessions of the state, who have burdened the country with pensions for their relatives, who have grasped every honour and distinction within their reach, who have looked upon patriotism and self-advancement as synonymous terms, and who have retired after their period of service to enjoy all the luxury and magnificence which their ill-gotten wealth could offer. Yet not to this class did Lord Beaconsfield belong. If he was an adventurer, considering the length of his career and the opportunities he enjoyed, he was a singularly unfortunate one. He had been created a peer, and on his breast glittered the star of the proudest order in Europe; but the adventurer is seldom content with honours, however distinguished their character, unless they assume a solid and more practical form. Beyond his official pay when in power—the pay of a partner in a second-rate commercial firm—Lord Beaconsfield drew no substantial advantages from his connection with the state. Unlike Walpole, the Hughenden he retired to was no palatial Houghton, furnished and embellished out of the guineas of the Treasury; nor, as in the case of the second Pitt, was an admiring nation called upon to pay his debts. Lord Beaconsfield lived and died a comparatively poor man: what wealth he possessed he owed to private sources, and not to the public purse. A statesman who, after nearly half a century of active political life, was the leader of a great and united party, who ruled cabinets, who was the favoured adviser of his sovereign, yet who, on the day when he resigned the seals, went into retirement no richer than when he acceded to power, may perhaps be a noble and disinterested minister, but he is certainly no adventurer. It was power for its own sake, and not for any meretricious advantages which might be derived from power, that Lord Beaconsfield loved to wield. To be the head and responsible chief of an administration; to devote the activity and resources of his genius to the sacred cause of a pure and sensitive patriotism; to advise, since he was sure of his competence to advise, his country upon the course which it was best for her interests to follow; to act, in all that he counselled and achieved, so as to merit the approval of his sovereign and the confidence of parliament; to hold in supreme contempt the baser motives which so often influence an interested ambition; and to be, if not blameless, at least spotless—such was the authority Lord Beaconsfield wished to sway, such was the aim he set before him to attain, such was the one reward he cared to receive. Let us give heed to the graceful words of a generous rival:—

"It may be said that Lord Beaconsfield is ambitious," said Lord Hartington, when speaking to his constituents at the time of the last general election. "I should like to know what man who has attained the position which he has attained in the political life of his country is not actuated by feelings of ambition. No one certainly can attribute any mean or unworthy feelings to Lord Beaconsfield. We disagree with his politics, but we must admire the genius and talent which the man has shown under the disadvantages he has had to contend with. I firmly believe that Lord Beaconsfield has had in view what he believes to be the greatness of his country and the power of the sovereign whom he serves."

Of the public work which Lord Beaconsfield performed, and of the reasons which led him to oppose or uphold the measures brought under his notice, we need here say nothing more. It has been the object of this work to trace the public life of Lord Beaconsfield from its very beginning to its final close; to comment upon the motives by which he was influenced in all that he undertook; to record the numerous speeches by which he maintained the arguments he advanced and the position he occupied. The man and his labours, it is hoped, stand

revealed; and it is for the reader to decide how far the man was deserving of the applause he evoked, and how far his labours have ministered to the good of the nation. Nor have we any fear as to the result of that decision. The closer the character of Lord Beaconsfield is investigated, the deeper his speeches are studied, the more will political history reverence his name and admire his achievements, as one of the few great statesmen who have been called upon to control the destinies of a people, and to create a policy which it should be for the future to preserve and develop.

END OF VOL. II.

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INDEX.

LIST OF PLATES.

VOL. I.

VOL. II.

Bio ?

British P.M.